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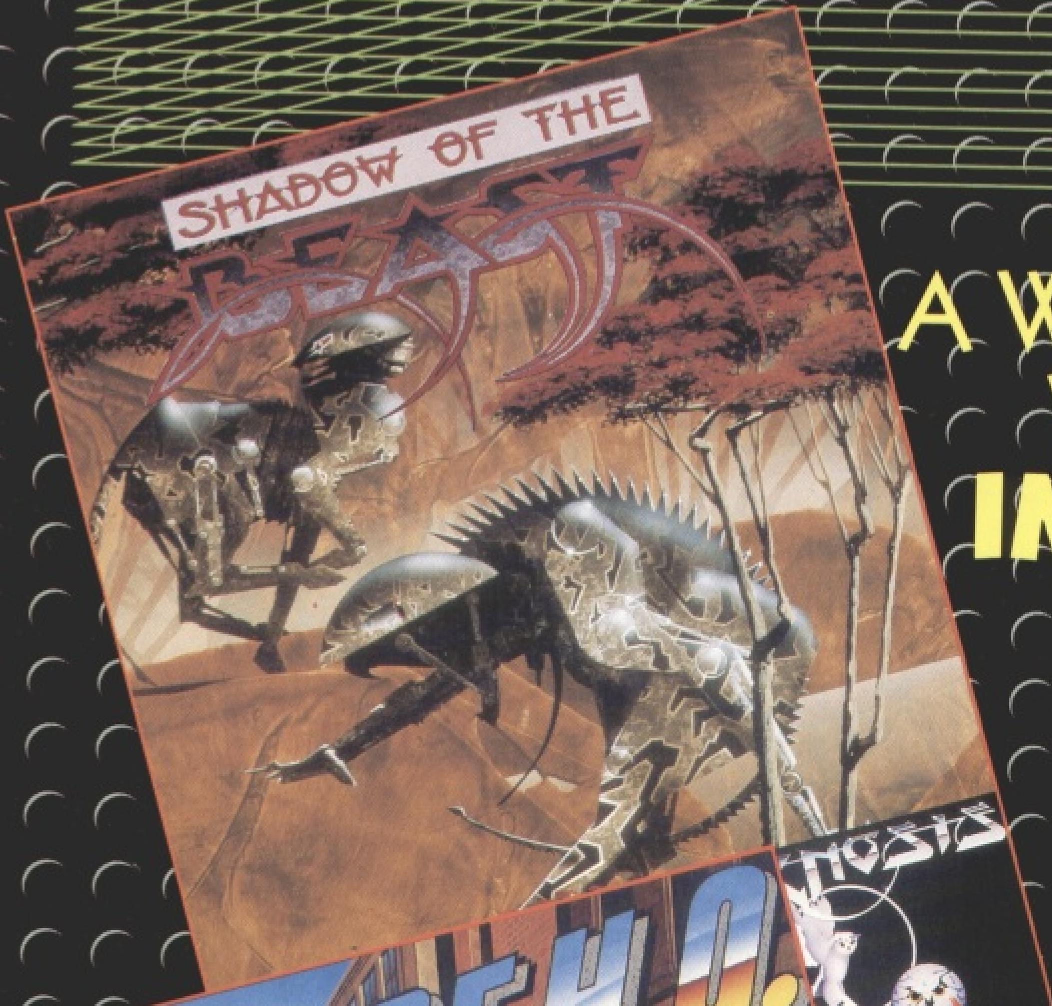
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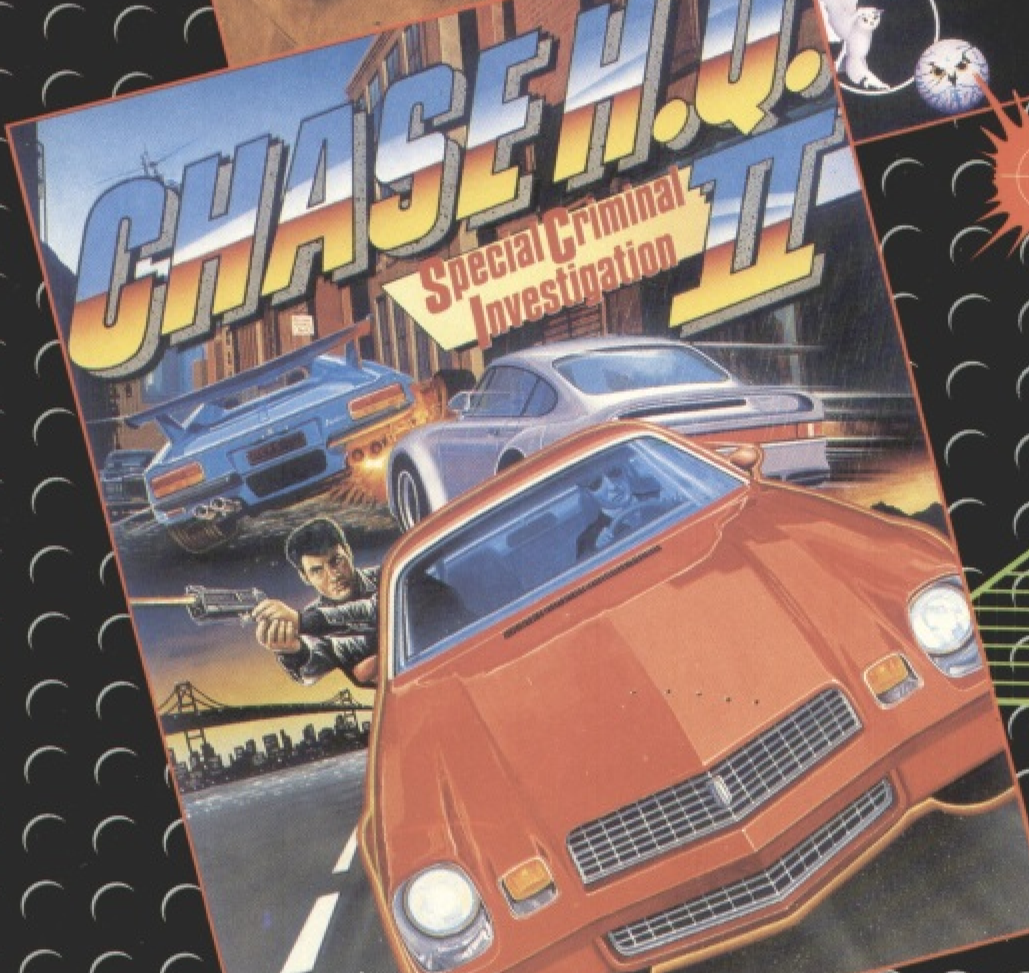
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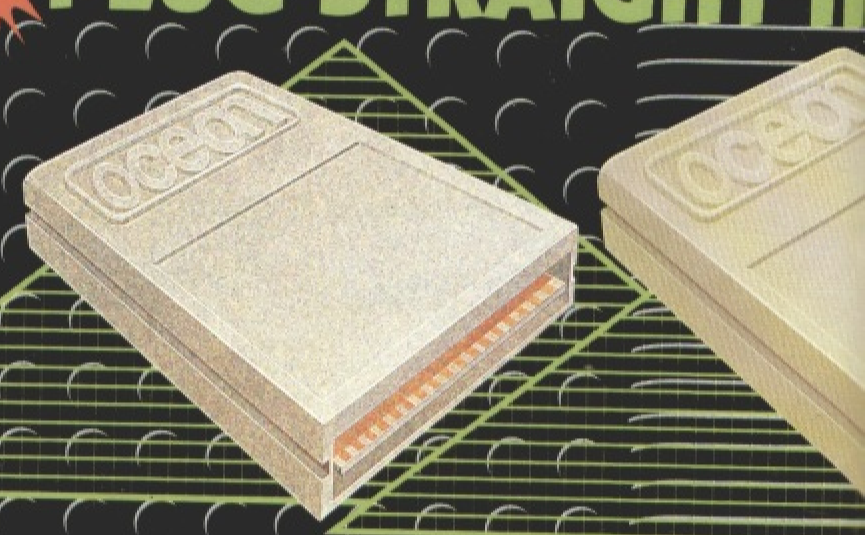
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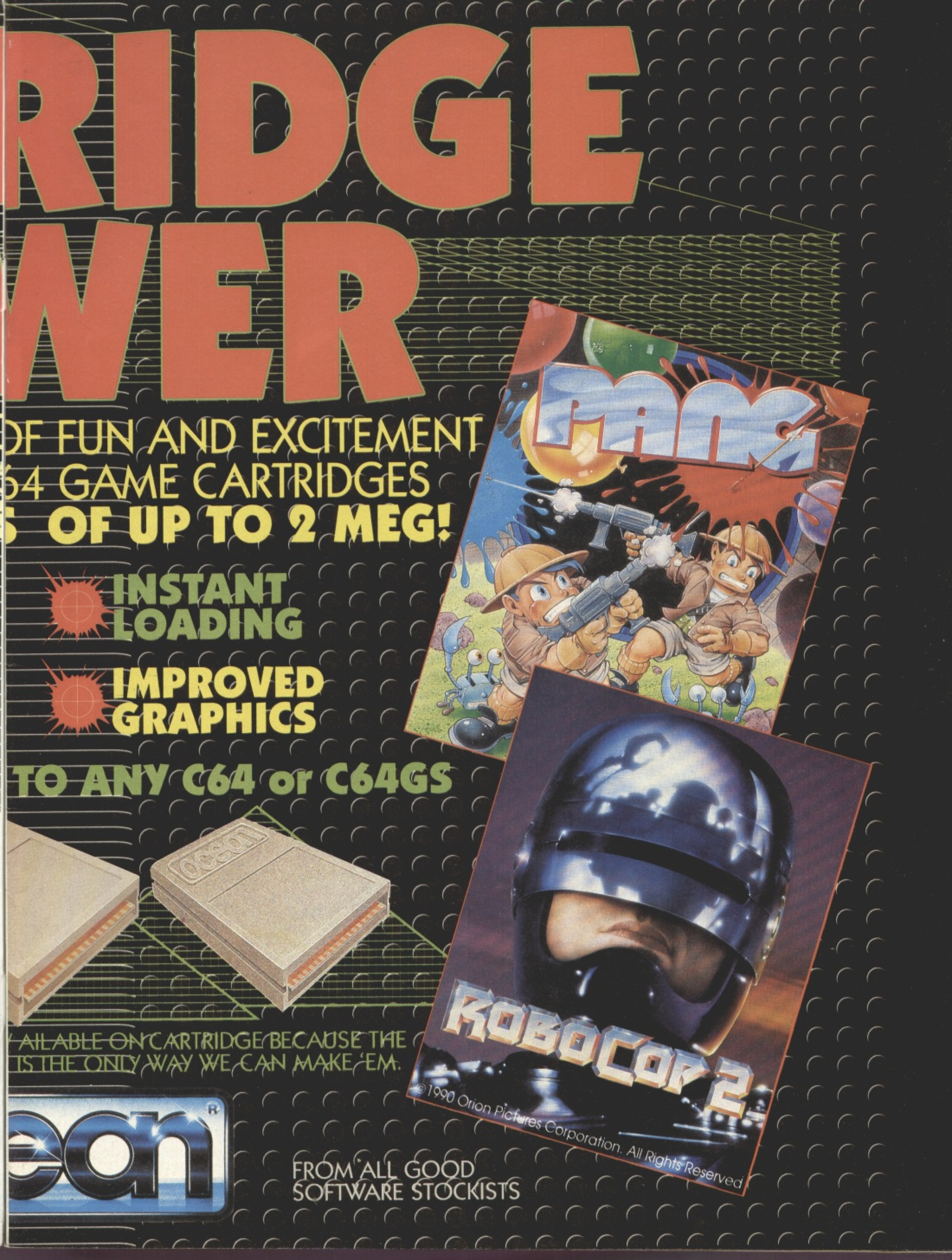




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MEAN MACHINES JANUARY ISSUE FOUR







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THANKS THIS MONTH TO: Bing Bang-Bing for the big bananas, and Tarquin "Jobbie" Donuts for trumping very loudly in Church last Sunday.

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COMPETITION RULES
No EMAP employees or their immediate kin may enter, but everyone else can, apart from Dwayne Minton of West Wormwood because he's the biggest twerp in the entire universe and suffers from terrible halitosis (look that up in the dictionary, kids). The Editor's decision is final, and no correspondence shall be entered into. So you can throw ten fits on the floor and dribble out of your bottom, but we won't take any notice at all.

FINALLY
Ah-ha! The first wibbly wobbly bottom-of-the-page, tiniest-text-in-the-mag rubbish bit of 1991. What can we say? "You can run, but you can't hide". "Here goes nothing". "Give me something I can blow up". "Your move creep". "Go ahead, make my day". "Who's laughing now". "Not bad for a human". "Ha-ha! Ho-ho! He-he!". "You take a chance sticking your face in a fan". "Who do you listen to when you're making out". Who knows? But if you can spot which films those quotes come from, send them in to MEAN MACHINES at the usual address, marking your envelope "I'm one hell of a film-buff smartass". The first correct entry will win a Gameboy. We expect nobody to win...

HAPPY 1991!

Not much room to write my usual rubbish this month, you'll be pleased to hear, because the space is taken up with the results of all the MEAN MACHINES competitions we've judged so far. Did you enter? Well, your name might well be in the list below - check it out.

A final quick word - Happy New Year to all you console owners! We confidently predict that 1991 is going to be the year of the console - if you thought that Nintendo and Sega were successful last year, you ain't seen nothing yet.

There's a whole load of incredible new games in the pipeline - keep reading MEAN MACHINES and you'll learn all about them...

See you later!

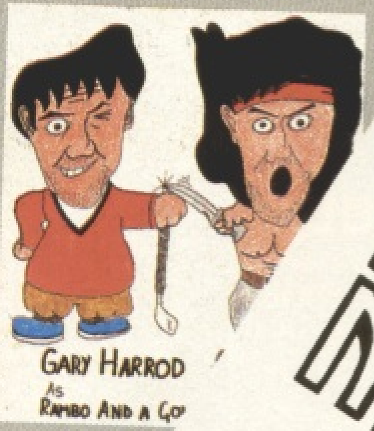
ROB 'N' GEORGE - THE MAIL MEN

If you've ever wanted to know what the MEAN MACHINES postmen look like, wonder now more. Pictured here are Rob and George, the guys that sort out all your mail! So now you know who to blame if your letter gets lost...



SUPER PICS

We've had some more super pics from your readers. Jim Sheppard from Monmouth in Gwent sent in the wonderful colour cartoon of the MEAN MACHINES gang - let's have some more, Jim! Jasvinder Bhiu of Southall, Middx sent in the super Christmas card, Danny Gasser of London N18 penned the MEAN MACHINES advert, and Russell Clamp sent in the pictures of our very own cult, Gary Harrod. Thanks to everyone concerned - we want more, more, more!









RESULTS

COMP HEAP

Needless to say, the response to the competitions in the first and second issues of MEAN MACHINES was incredible. Our poor postmen, Rob and George, are having treatment for their hernias at this precise moment. Anyway, we know that you're dying to hear who won the fabby prizes, so here goes!

PHONE LINE COMPS

Guess who's the proud owner of a spanking-new Gameboy? Peter Guthrie of East Lothian, that's who! It's winging its way to you now Peter.

The Turbografx, on the other hand, was won by Julie Hammond of Merseyside. She'll be admiring those amazing colours and listening to that stereo sound within the week! Congratulations, Julie.

The five Master System games have been snapped up by Malcolm Thompson of Cardiff. We'll be in contact to find out your choices soon!

G Henry of Portsmouth has won £150 of software for his (or her - which are you, G?) machine, a Master System. Again, we'll find out what you want in the next week or so.

The Megadrive phone line was, unsurprisingly, the most popular. It was won by lucky old Wayne Doric of Leicester. No doubt he'll become even more popular at school now!

HANDY DANDY RANDY BANDY COMPO!

This not-to-difficult test was won by Gary Hussein of Knightsbridge (not exactly a slum, eh Gary?). The answer was of course Luigi, which was spelled in some interesting ways by many entrants! Still, congratulations, Gary, and expect a fabulous Gameboy in the post in a nonce.

IF I WON I WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT TO CHOOSE COMPO

The number of entries for this comp was stunning, and thanks to everyone who bothered to enter. Dai-Ichi Consoles UK, the wonderful people supplying the prize, have selected a winner; and it is...ta-da... R Beasley of Upton Park, London! As this is Oz's neck of the woods, he or she (please give your full name, people!) will be in good company. Just watch out for roving Hammers fans and those elusive tramps! Congrats, R, hope you enjoy your choice of a Megadrive plus game!

The second ish's competitions also had a phenomenal response. Here are the winners of the Hotline comps:

WIN A GAMEBOY

A glorious handheld will be winging its way to Helen Jones of Nottingham soon. Hope you enjoy the free Tetris game!

WIN A MEGADRIVE

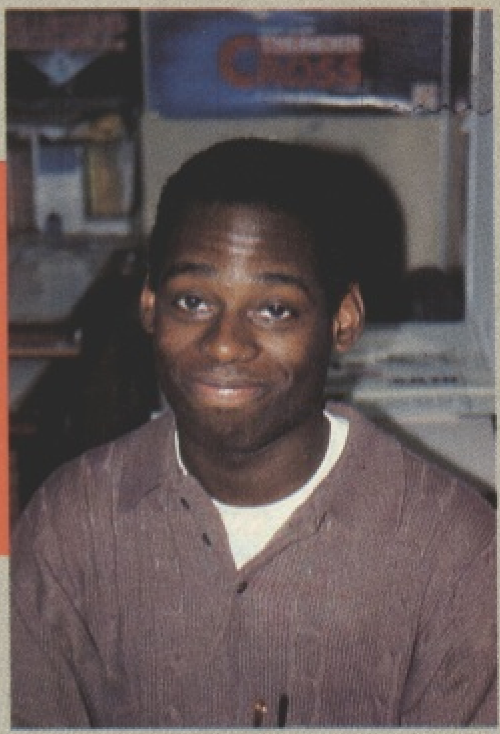
This spanking new 16 bit machine has been grabbed by Simon Harley of Exeter. He's done himself as favour by entering this comp; let's hope he becomes a regular contributor to the Tips section!



JULIAN "JAZ" RIGNALL
Yak-tastic! No barber has been near this long-haired hippy greebo for years - no wonder he looks like a mad Yak. He promises to get his hair cut sometime soon - the hair merchants who've been commissioned to tidy his growth are currently waiting for specially reinforced sheers to be imported from Latvia.
CURRENT FAVE GAMES: SUPER MARIO BROS IV, MICKEY MOUSE, SNAKE, RATTLE 'N' ROLL



MATTHEW "MATT" REGAN
Quiff-tabulous! Matt is the MEAN MACHINES quiff king. His hair is the neatest and tidiest in the entire office. Only one barber, Alfonzo the scissor maestro of Wanstead, is allowed to touch his perfect locks. He also does a lot of good work for charity...
CURRENT FAVE GAMES: JOHN MADDEN'S FOOTBALL, PINBOT, SUPER MARIO BROS IV



OZ "NAH, I WOZ RESTIN'" BROWNE
Afro-docious! Oz is another dude with a severe haircut. He was thinking about growing it into a serious 70's Afro, and getting a pair of trendy bell ends and platform wellies so he could pose down his local disco. Fortunately he's decided against this - he couldn't stand us laughing at him!
CURRENT FAVE GAMES: JOHN MADDEN'S FOOTBALL, RINGSIDE ANGELS



GARY "RUBBER BOY" HARROD
Skin-sational! Gary recently had all his hair cut off - we think he did it for charity, but nobody can confirm this. Now he looks like a cue ball with stubble. Or is that a coconut with mange. Still, it hasn't affected his drawing abilities...
CURRENT FAVE GAMES: JOHN MADDEN'S FOOTBALL, MICKEY MOUSE, SNAKE, RATTLE 'N' ROLL

THANKS TO

Console Concepts (formerly known as PC Engine Supplies) of Stoke for supplying us with all the Gameboy games we reviewed this ish, as well as Hard Drivin' on the Megadrive.

THE RATINGS

RATINGS WORK

Here at MEAN MACHINES we are committed to giving you the most in-depth console reviews possible. Here's how they work.

GAME DIFFICULTY: This tells you how easy or tough the game is. If you're a novice player, easy games should keep you happy. If you're a veteran joystick-jockey, medium or hard games are recommended.

LIVES: Tells you how many times can you die and still return from the grave.

CONTINUES: Tells you how often you can restart from where you died. Beware: too many continues can allow you to finish the game too quickly, and seriously damage your enjoyment.

SKILL LEVELS: Many games let you fix the difficulty level for yourself, so you can increase the challenge if you get good at it. This tells you how many skill levels there are.

RESPONSIVENESS: Is it humanly possible to avoid that mutant's death-beam, or does the joystick refuse to obey your frantic commands? This section lets you know!

PRESENTATION: This is an important part of any game. Are the instructions clear (and in English)? Do the option screens make sense and look pretty? Is the screen well laid out? Is there plenty of in-game info? This rating tells you all.

GRAPHICS: This includes not only the quality of the sprites and their animation, but the backgrounds as well. Graphics are judged not only on their prettiness, but on how well they are suited to the game.

SOUND: The difference between a booming, catchy intro tune and a few weak bleeps that sound like a dying Spectrum is indicated here. Music and effects can make a big difference to a game, so don't ignore this factor.

PLAYABILITY: Some games you just can't stop playing, no matter how late at night it is. This measures the addictiveness of the game, and how much you'll think about it - even when you're not playing it!

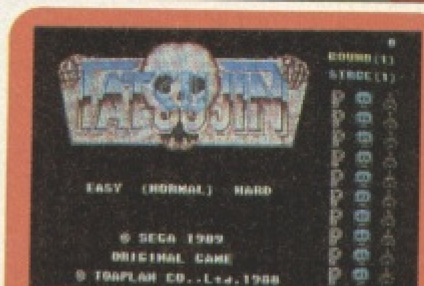
LASTABILITY: You don't want to spend your cash on something that will only last a week. Check this box out to judge if you are going to be playing it in a month, or be bored with it within a week.

OVERALL: This is it. This mark takes into account all the above ratings and acts as a guide to the game's overall quality. If a game scores over 90%, it's a Megagame and is well worth buying!

PLAYERS: Simply tells you how many players can play the game - either simultaneously, or one after the other.

MEGADRIVE

REVIEW



BY: SEGA

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: NOV
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY/MED
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: UNLIMITED
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: VERY FAST

1 PLAYERS

PRESENTATION 71%
Three skill levels, but little else.

GRAPHICS 82%
Bright, with well defined sprites

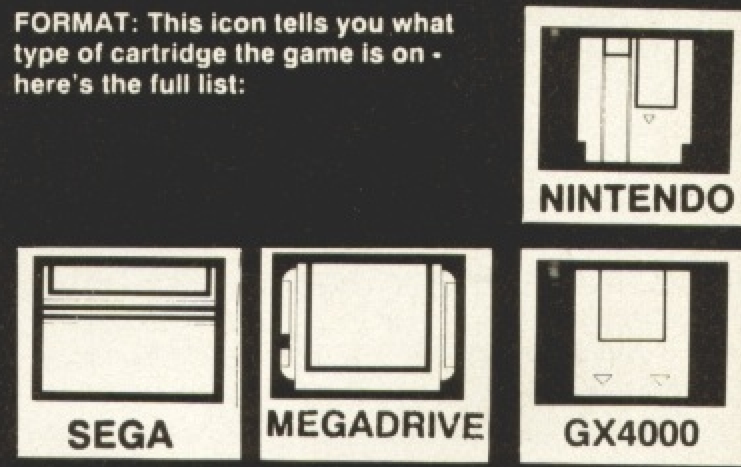
SOUND 74%
A decent, if rather tinny tune and basic effects.

PLAYABILITY 85%
Easy enough to begin with, getting rapidly harder. Highly addictive stuff!

LASTABILITY 76%
Experienced blasters should be able to complete the game - if not, you'll certainly have fun trying.

OVERALL 82%
A highly enjoyable blasting romp. Recommended to shoot 'em up fans.

FORMAT: This icon tells you what type of cartridge the game is on - here's the full list:

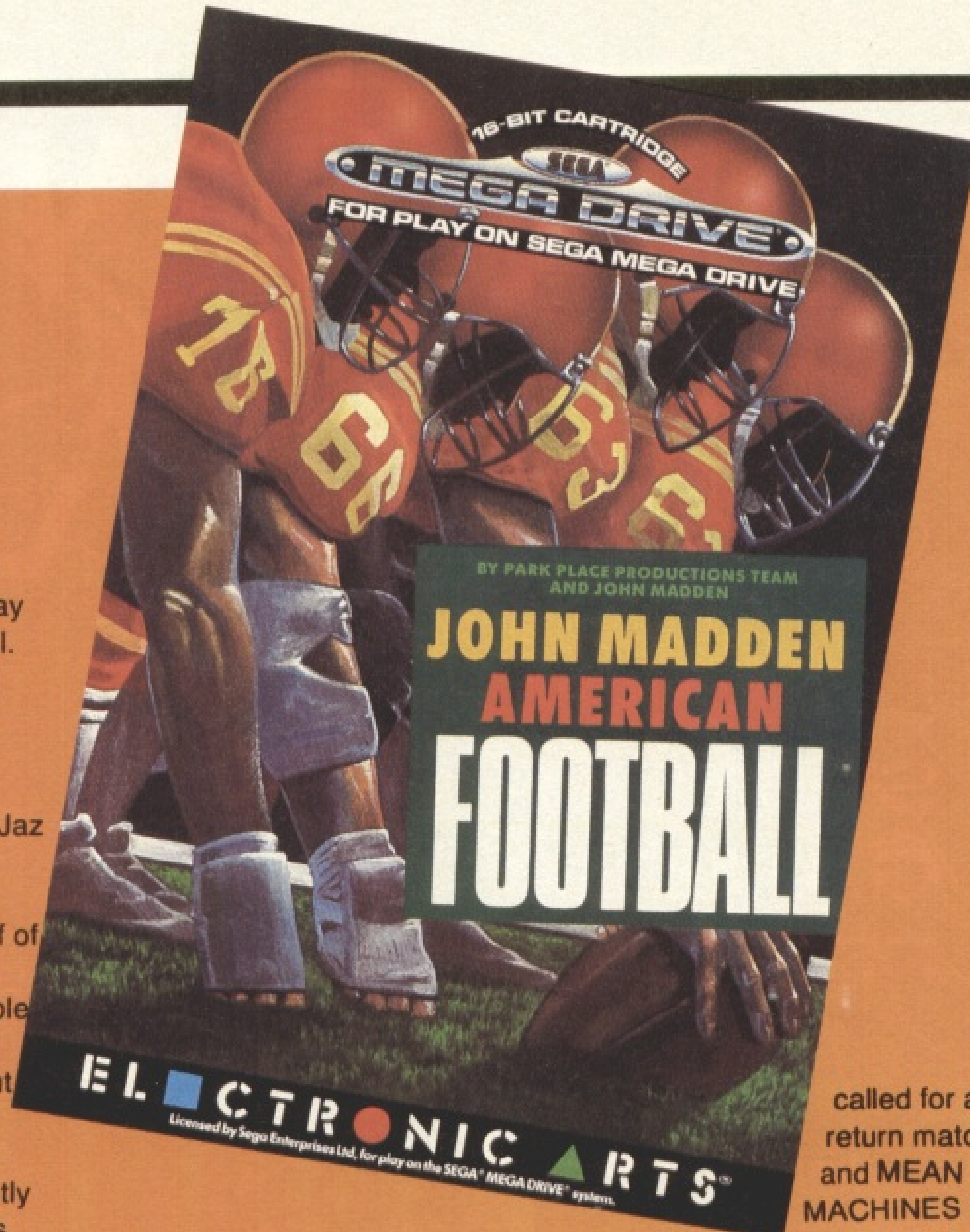


GAME TYPE: These nifty icons show you what sort of game it is - here's the full list:




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JOHN MADDEN'S FOOTBALL CHALLENGE



Last month, MEAN MACHINES challenged Electronic Arts to play them at John Madden's Football. The gauntlet was taken up, and the two teams were brought together for an evening's entertainment.

After initial knock-out bouts, Jaz turned out to be the MEAN MACHINES representative and Scott scraped through on behalf of Electronic Arts. The final was played in front of the considerable turn-out, and a rather disappointing match it turned out to be.

Sportsmanship took a back seat as Scott, who had apparently spent every hour of the previous week in training, exploited a shortfall in the computer referee's pass interference analysis with some very brutal coverage tactics, knocking Jazza's brave players for six every time he went for the ball. In the face of these dirty, low-down tricks, Jaz battled heroically, but eventually lost 59-14.

Electronic Arts has already called for a return match, and MEAN MACHINES has accepted. This time we'll include Gary Harrod on the team and will respond to rough play with similar tactics! We'll bring you a report when it happens...

CONSOLES WE ONCE LOVED

NUMBER FOUR: INTELLIVISION

Launched in late 1981, the Intellivision proved to be quite a rival for the Atari VCS. It sported better graphics, better sound and bigger memory - and even had a special speech cartridge which some games utilised, although it must be said that the overall effect was something akin to a rusty Dalek with laryngitis!

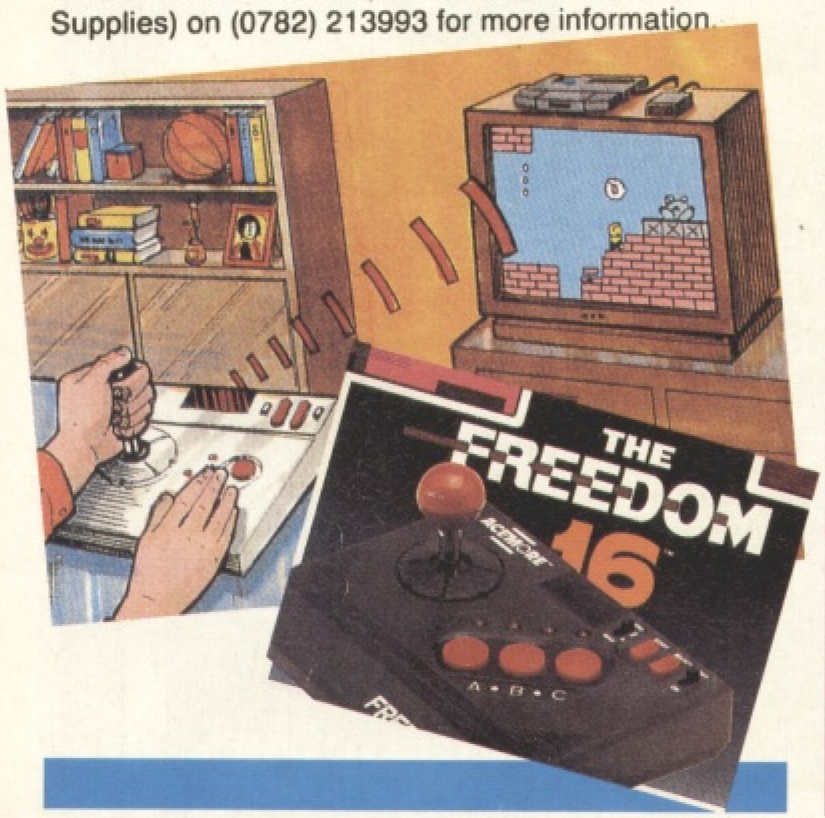
Plenty of games appeared on the machine, mostly arcade conversions of top coin-ops of the period like Defender, Donkey Kong, PacMan, Pole Position, Dig Dug, Popeye and Commando, as well as a variety of original games such as Dungeons and Dragons, Beamrider, HERO, Pitfall and Armour Battle.

There were peripherals too, such as the game unit, which incorporated a keyboard for use with specialised games and a range of educational



LOOK MA - NO LEADS!

A new infra-red, wireless joypad has been out in America for the Genesis (known over here as the Megadrive) - but it's available here as well. The Freedom 16, as it's known, comes from a company called Acemore, and features automatic rapid fire and its own on/off switch, so you can save the batteries when it's not in use. This joypad is a life-saver for those who are fed up with getting their leads tangled - and having to sit so close to the Megadrive. The price? £35.00 to you, squire. If you're interested, contact Console Concepts (formerly PC Engine Supplies) on (0782) 213993 for more information.



GAMEBOY GOES BANANAS

If you're a little peeved at the lack of official British Gameboy releases recently, take heart - Nintendo have just sent us a list of titles you'll be able to get during next year. They stressed that this was a provisional list, and other titles may be added!

From January to February, Fortress of Fear (Wizards and Warriors), Spiderman, Gargoyle's Quest and Double Dragon will appear in the shops. During March and April, Chess Master and Dr Mario will become available, and from June to August Dragon's Lair, Side Pocket, Bomber Boy, Radar Mission, Boulderdash, Mercenary Force, Othello and PacMan will appear. From October you'll be able to get your grubby mitts on F-1 Race, Metroid, RC Pro-Am and the wonderfully-named Princess Blobette!

Not a bad set of games at all. And we'll be reviewing them in MEAN MACHINES as soon as we can get our hands on them!



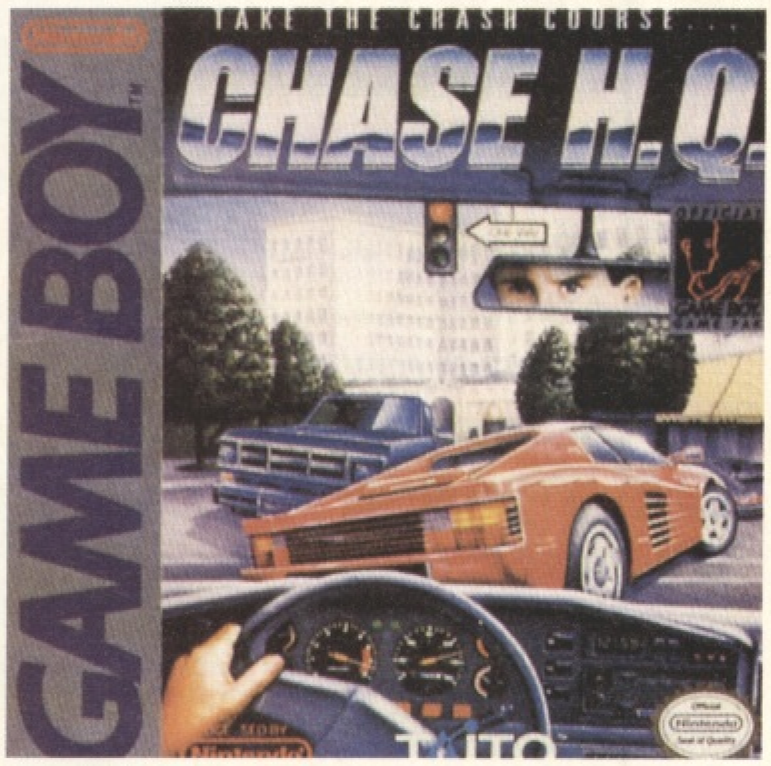




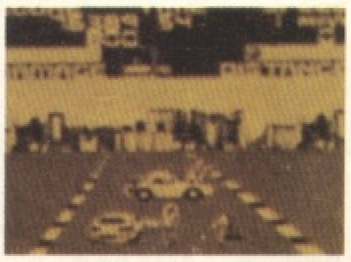
NINTENDO GO BANANAS

Not only have Nintendo got a bucketful of Gameboy titles ready for release, they've also got a whole load of NES games waiting for shipment. Amongst them are Mindscape's superb conversion of Gauntlet II, Rescue, Gremlins II, the game of the film, Bad Dudes (a coin-op conversion better known in the UK as Dragon Ninja), Super Spike Volleyball (yet another coin-op conversion, better known as Super Dodgeball) and a football game called Nintendo World Cup.

"What are these games like", we hear you cry. Well, if you wait until next month, we'll tell you all about them!



Chase HQ, the popular car-chasing coin-op, is about to appear on the Gameboy. According to those who've seen pre-release version, it's an amazing conversion which features all the thrills and spills of the original! Sounds like one to look out for!





NEW YEAR SPECIAL

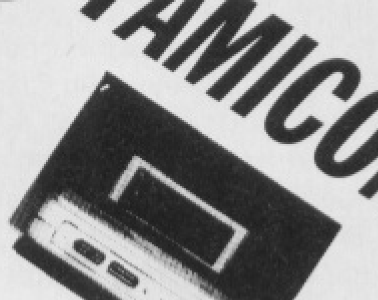
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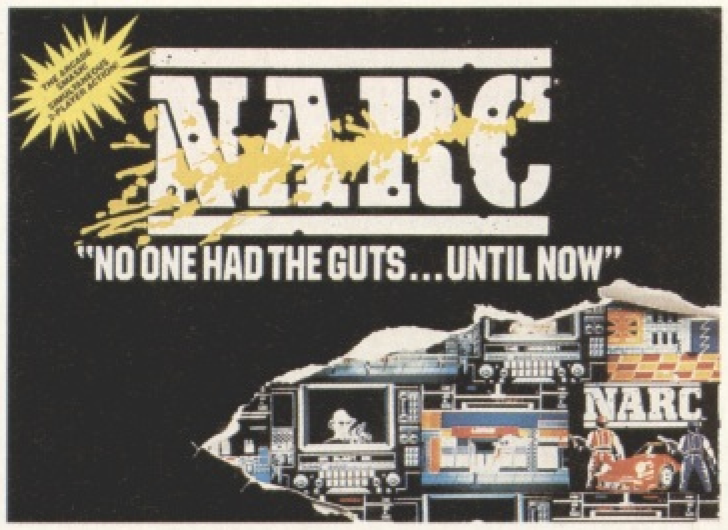
VISITOR'S WELCOME – RING FOR AN APPOINTMENT



Back to the Future fans will be pleased to hear that the two sequels, Back to the Future II and III are to appear together on a single Nintendo cartridge. Featuring platform levels based around both films, you take control of Marty McFly as he battles Bif Tannen's ancestors and offspring through four separate time zones - 1885, 1955, 1985 and 2015! It all looks pretty good fun - we'll bring you more news as soon as we have a UK release date.

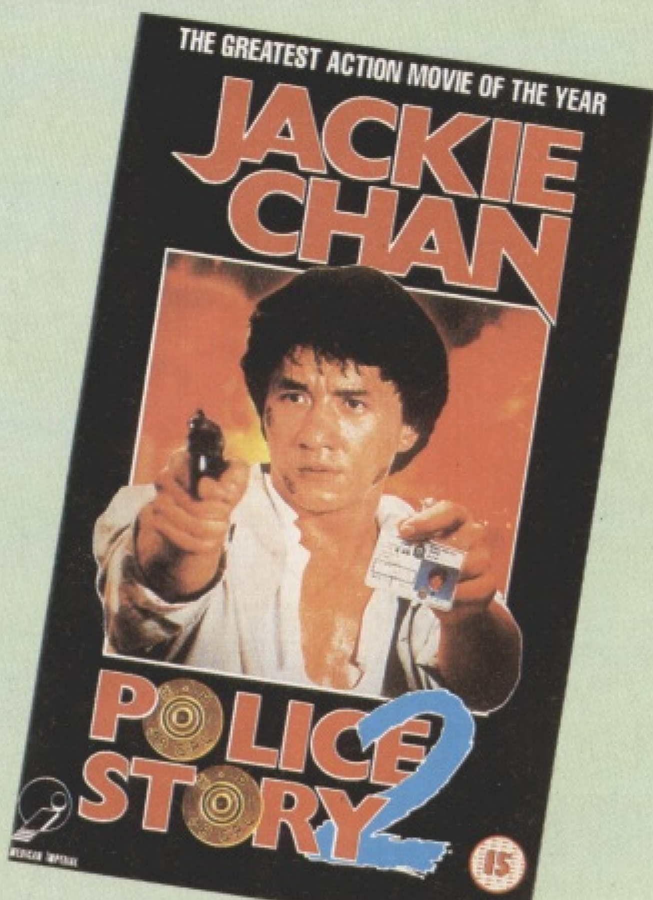
NARC OFF!

William's highly popular and ultra-gory arcade game, NARC, has recently been released on the Nintendo in the US. Incorporating many of the original coin-op's features, it's up to you (and a second player if you have a friend around) to go against Mr Big's army of drug-crazed no-good hoodlums. Since they're nasty drug-dealing types, you've got carte blanche to use everything in your power to blast them away - you can shoot them with machine guns, blow them up with your rocket launchers and even run them over in your flash Porsche! Sounds like a lorra, lorra laffs to us - we'll give you a further update later this year.



JACKIE CHAN's ACTION KUNG FU™

Mega kung-fu personality and film star extraordinary, Jackie Chan, has recently endorsed a new Nintendo game in the US. Jackie Chan's Action Kung-Fu has, as you might expect, plenty of beat 'em up action as you guide Jackie past molten lava pits, fight tigers and walk through crypts filled with the undead on the way to kicking in the Prince of Sorcerers, who's been causing a bit of a ruck down at his manor. It looks pretty good, but fans of Jackie Chan will be disappointed to learn that there's no official British release date as yet.









ニュース

NEWS FROM JAPAN

SHADOW DANCES IN





Recently released in Japan, and available on import in the UK at the moment is Shadow Dancer, a not-too-accurate conversion of the rather mediocre arcade game. The idea is to take control of a Shinobi-type character and his dog and guide him around the Shinobi-type landscape, lobbing shurikens or knifing Shinobi-type baddies.

It's all very reminiscent of Revenge of Shinobi, but has neither the addictive qualities or the challenge. Ardent Shinobi fans will get some pleasure out of this, but we were all disappointed by the rather poor graphics and complete lack of originality.



RINGSIDE ANGELS

If you enjoy watching women's wrestling, you'll certainly get a kick out of the latest Megadrive game to be released in Japan. Suzuki's Ringside Angels, endorsed by Japan's glamorous (and very talented) top wrestling star Suzuki, puts you in the ring with a variety of other famous fighting females.

The idea is to wrestle your way to the top by defeating your foes in one-on-one bouts. There are a variety of different moves available to the player, and battles can be fought out of the ring as well as in it! Although the graphics are nothing special, the great gameplay, two-player option and slightly pervy moves resulted in this going down a storm in the office!







Hole in One Professional, a new golf game soon to appear on the Super Famicom, looks utterly incredible! Utilising a special 3D graphics chip called the Polygiser, gorgeous 3D graphics are generated to make this the most realistic golf simulation yet seen. Just check out the screen shots and see what we mean!







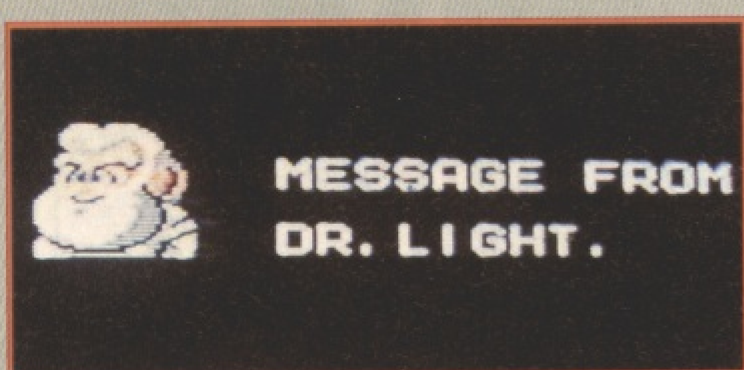
MEGA II

Dr Wily is a bit of naughty chap, isn't he? After somehow escaping the near-fatal pasting you gave him in Mega Man 1, he's back - but with eight more mechanised meanies to protect him. Enter Mega Man, a streetwise super-robot fresh from success in the original game. He decides that the evil Dr Wily must be taught a lesson once and for all.

Before departing on his voyage of destruction and platform leaping adventures, Mega Man pauses only to scoop up his Electro-Death Cannon and communications unit, so he can keep in touch with his creator, Dr Light. There are nine levels in Mega Man 2. Eight of them are the stomping grounds of Wily's robo-cronies and these can be played in any order. Level nine (Wily's domain) can only be visited when the other eight have been conquered and there's plenty of surprises still be to be uncovered once you get there!



▲ *Dr Light keeps in touch...*



▲ *Travelling the skies in Air Man's domain!*

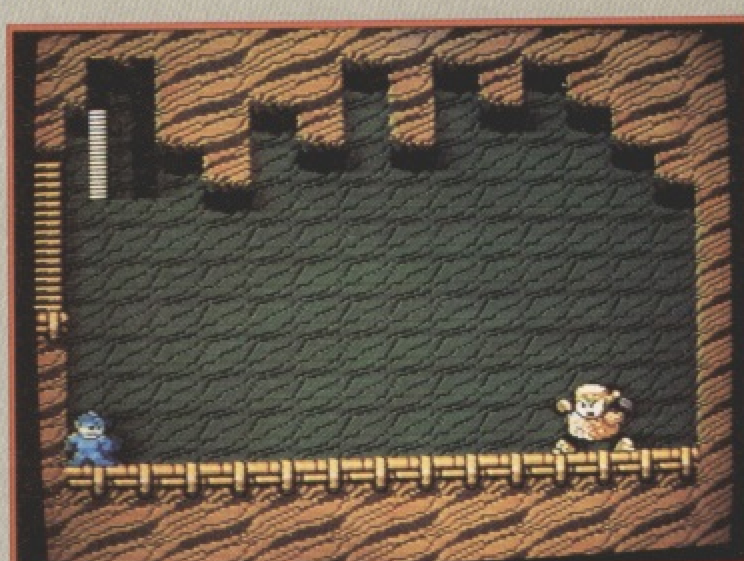


COMMENT



MATT

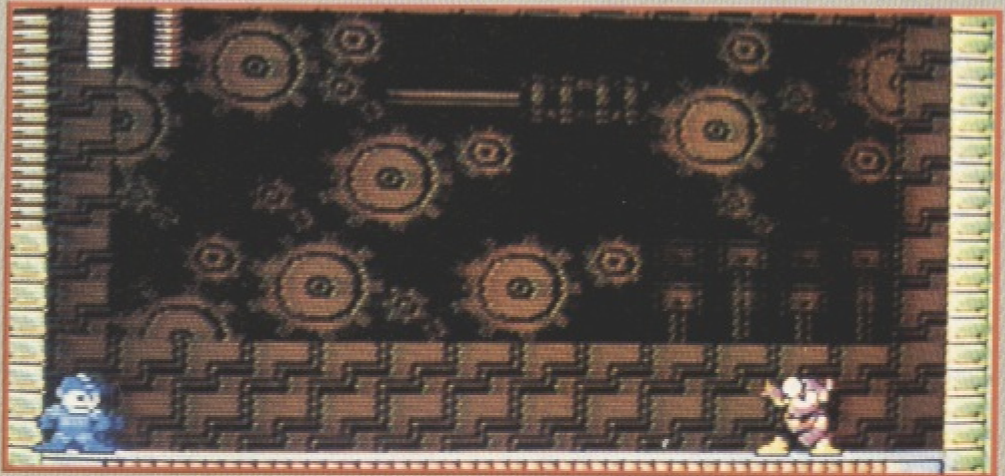
Every time I play Mega Man 2, I just seem to like the game more and more! Everything required to make a platform game incredibly entertaining has been crammed in. The graphics are varied and possess amazing detail. The sprites are probably the best I've seen in a Nintendo game. The sound can't be faulted either with great effects and tunes. But it's the playability that really makes this game so brilliant. The programmers must have spent months racking their brains to come up with the mind-warping puzzles seen here. I'll put this simply. Mega Man 2 ranks as one the greatest NES games I've ever seen, with unsurpassed addictive qualities. Buy it as soon as possible.



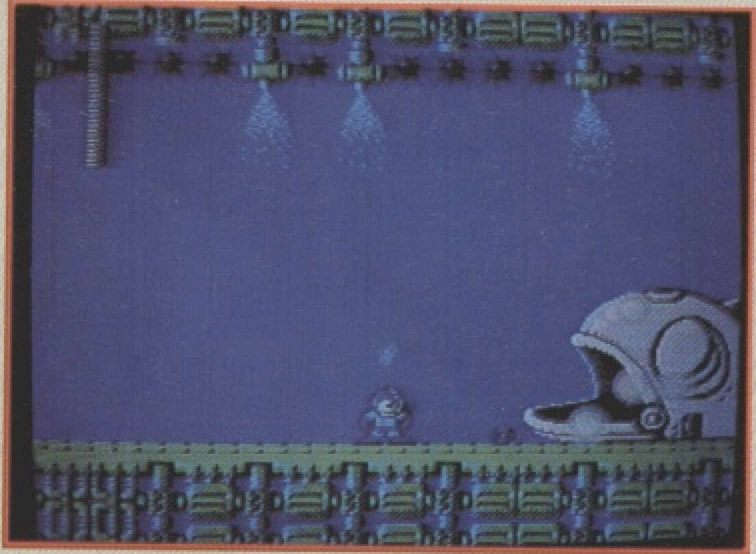
▲ *Facing up to an end-of-level guardian!*



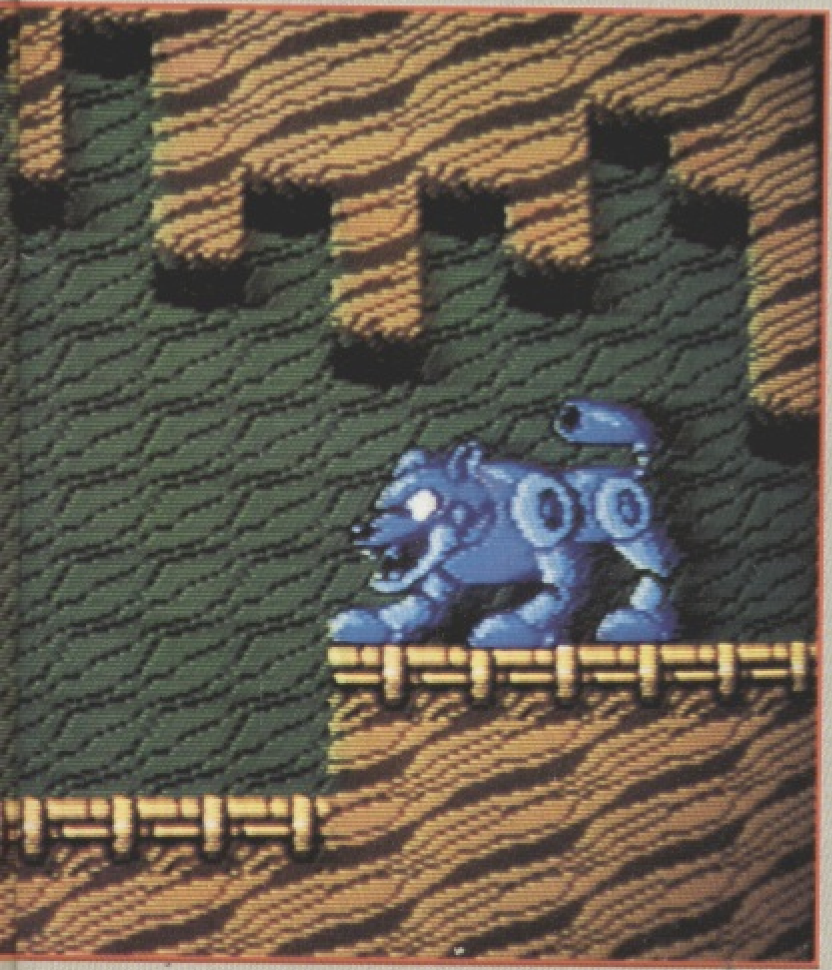
MAN



▲ *Dr Light keeps in touch...*



▲ *Foes of all shapes and sizes tremble before Man!*



HENCHMEN HIT LIST

Dr Wily's new, improved meanies aren't exactly the most hospitable folks in the game to say the least. Each has a powerful special weapon that could spell doom to our Mega hero! However, beat them up and Mega Man can confiscate their weaponry and use it for his own ends.





BUBBLE MAN: Wily's weakest creation, Bubble Man requires just a few hits from the Electro-Cannon to send him packing. His special power is "Bubble-Lead", which isn't very powerful but is pretty useful for disposing of foes below you.



AIR MAN: Fires off a multitude of powerful tornadoes at Mega Man with the aid of his "Air-Shooter". Air Man is another relative weakling that even next door's cat should be able to dispose of with little or no effort.



WOOD MAN: With his terrifying "Leaf-Shield", Wood Man requires plenty of practice to beat. Unfortunately once Mega Man gets his hands on the shield he might as well cry "shoo!" at the enemy for all the good it does.



QUICK MAN: His "Quick-Boomerangs" are the fastest weapon available, but not the most powerful. Getting to Quick Man is the worst problem. During the level huge energy beams threaten to destroy Mega Man and speed along with cunning are required to beat them. Or maybe Flash Man can help...



HEAT MAN: "Atomic-Fire" makes Heat Man the terror that he is. With his fire-shielding capabilities and awesome fire-power, Heat Man is one of Wily's most powerful creations.



CRASH MAN: His bombing capabilities will spend the end for Mega Man, however one weapon can dispatch Crash-Man with only two shots! Crash Man's "Crash-Bomber" is also useful for blasting away walls in Flash Man's domain.



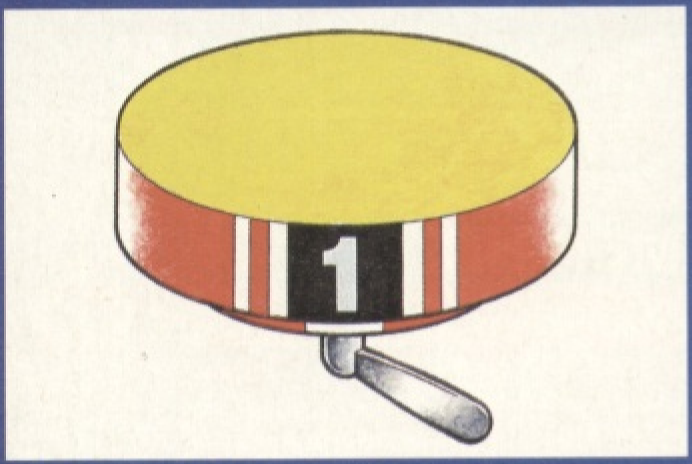
FLASH MAN: After negotiating screens of slippery platforms meeting up with Flash Man isn't exactly an inviting prospect. His "Time-Stopper" freezes everything, enabling him to finish you off without any interference. If Mega Man could get his hands on that...



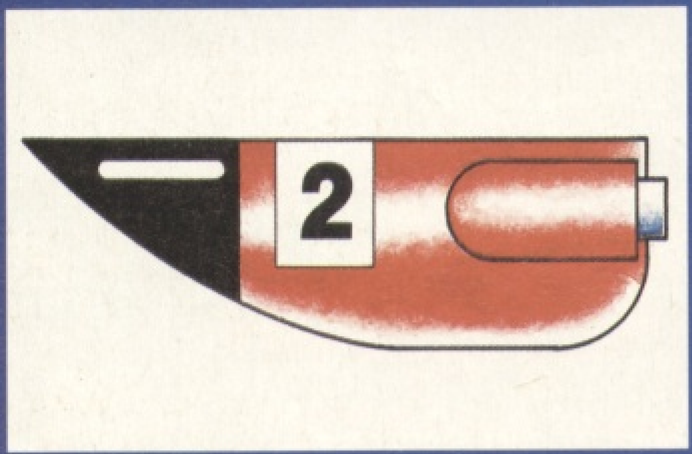
METAL MAN: Probably one of the toughest of Wily's henchmen. His "Metal-Blade" is the best all-round weapon and can be fired in eight directions! But first you've actually got to get through the Metal domain he lives in, and that ain't easy...

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

If Mega Man disposes of some of Wily's more dangerous robots his creator, Dr Light, will beam across some of his latest creations ready for instant use.



ITEM 1: Enables Mega Man to create his own platforms that rise upwards - essential when our hero needs that extra bit of height.



ITEM 2: Special Jet-Sleds streak across the screen horizontally, and our hero can use these as moving platforms - just the ticket for avoiding some of the game's nastier platform puzzles.



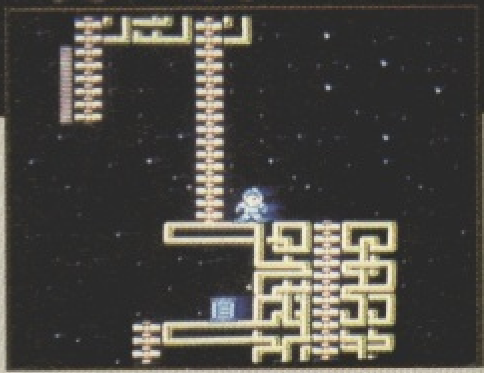
ITEM 3: Again, another kind of platform is created when Mega Man uses this item. These platforms bounce around until they hit a wall, which it will then follow upwards before vanishing.

Slippery floors abound in Flash Man's level. ▶



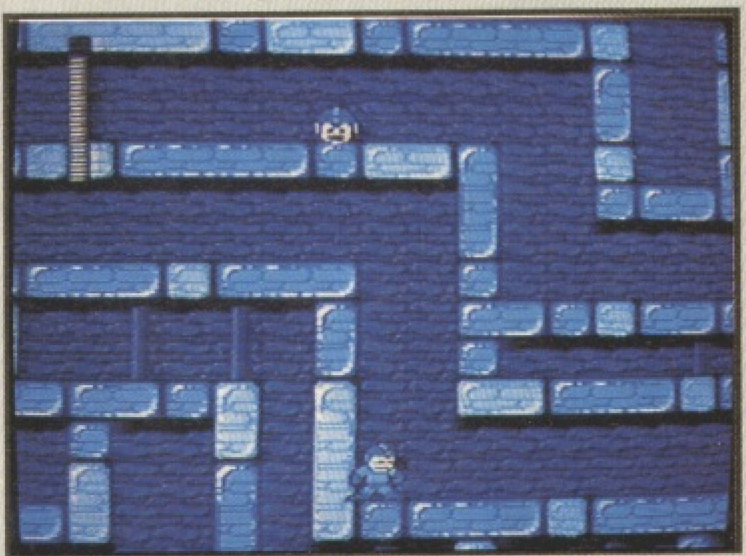
PLATFORMS 'N' TRAPS

So you think that nine levels of platform excitement isn't quite enough for you? Think again! Mega Man 2 uses every dirty trick ever seen in any platform game! Take Heat Man's stomping ground, for example. Here, platforms have a peculiar tendency to suddenly disappear from under our hero's feet - just when the next step to safety appears! Air Man's level is another good example of the type of dirty tricks this game has in store for you. Mega Man has to jump onto moving platforms, which may not sound too strenuous, except for the fact that an enemy sprite is already on there ready to attack! And once the first eight levels have been completed (and there's literally months of play in doing just that) there's another surprise in store. Dr Wily's castle isn't just one level. It's been split into four smaller sub-stages each packed with some of the most fiendish platform puzzles yet seen in a console game!



A TOKEN BONUS

Shooting the enemy sprites usually yields some kind of mega bonus that Mega Man can collect. The majority of power-ups come in two sizes, and obviously larger icons are likely to have more of an effect than smaller ones. Energy pearls and weapon re-energisers are two of the more frequent icons. But lucky players may be able to find extra men and special pods that enable Mega Man to claim extra energy - very useful if the end-of-level boss is giving our hero a bit of aggro.

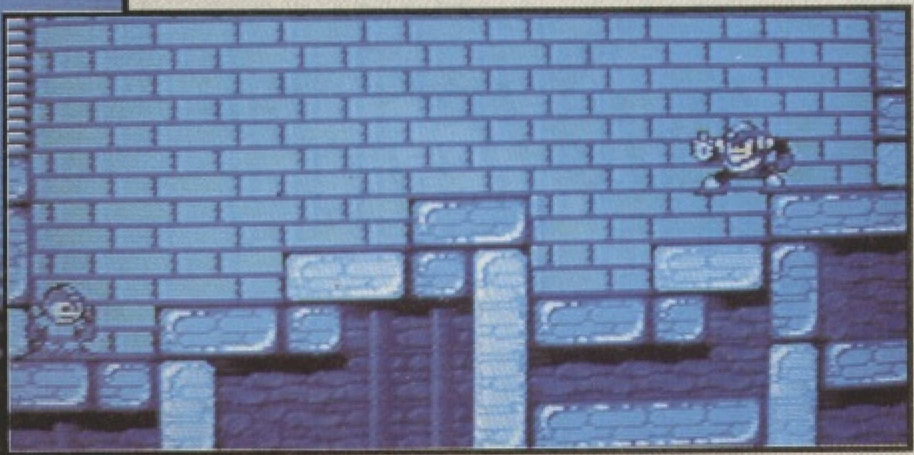




Switching between your amassed weaponry couldn't be easier. Simply pressing the start buttons pauses the action, and it's here that you choose your new weapon. You can tell when the new weapon







▲ *Flash Man confronts our hero!*



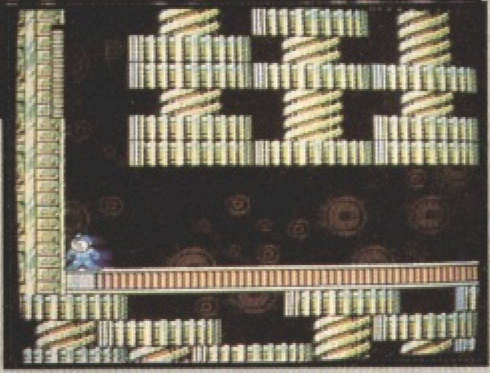
▲ *Mega Man enters the domain of Bubble Man!*

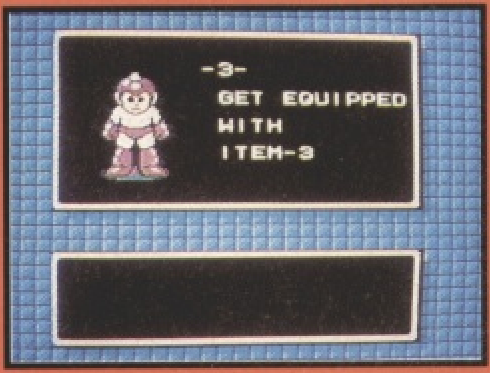
COMMENT



JULIAN

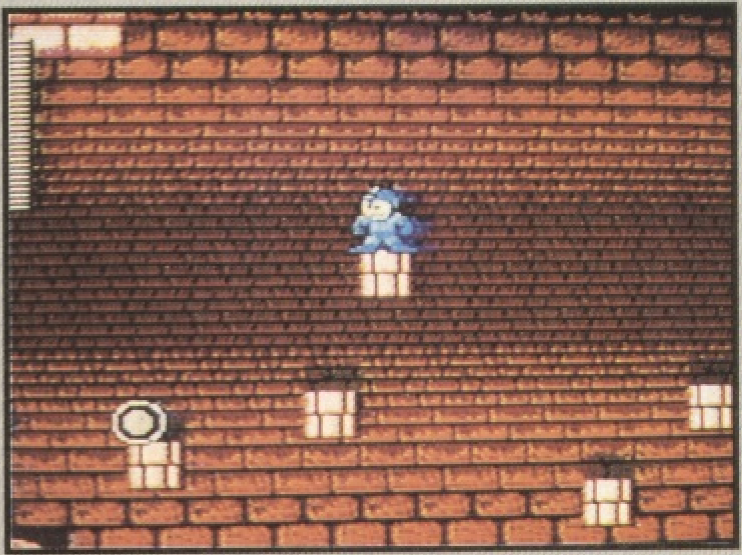
Wahey! Mega Man is back, and this time he's brought... er... I don't know. What has he brought? Well, fab graphics for one thing. The sprites and backdrops are absolutely stunning - just feast your eyes on the screen shots and see what I mean! My favourites are the fire-spitting robo-dogs which wag their tail when they're roasting you! Like the original Mega Man, the gameplay is beautifully balanced, letting you get just a little bit further into the game each time you play. There are some incredibly tricky parts of the landscape to negotiate, and you have to do a fair bit of thinking to work out how to get past them - but there's always a way! Mega Man 2 is one of the finest platform games ever seen - invest your Christmas money in it now!





has been selected, because Mega Man's chameleonic costume changes colour. Your stored energy canisters and Dr Light's useful gifts can also be utilised on the pause screen, before getting back to the real task of giving Dr Wily a right royal kick up the backside.

▼ *Watch out for the disappearing platforms, Mega Man!*





BY: CAPCOM

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: JAN
GAME DIFFICULTY: MED/HARD
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: UNLIMITED
SKILL LEVELS: 2
RESPONSIVENESS: MEGA

1 PLAYERS

PRESENTATION 93%

Great intro screens and a superb feel to the game itself.

GRAPHICS 96%

Probably the greatest variety of backdrops and sprites yet seen in a NES game - and they're all brill!

SOUND 92%

Funky tunes and spot-on effects compete for the player's attention.

PLAYABILITY 96%

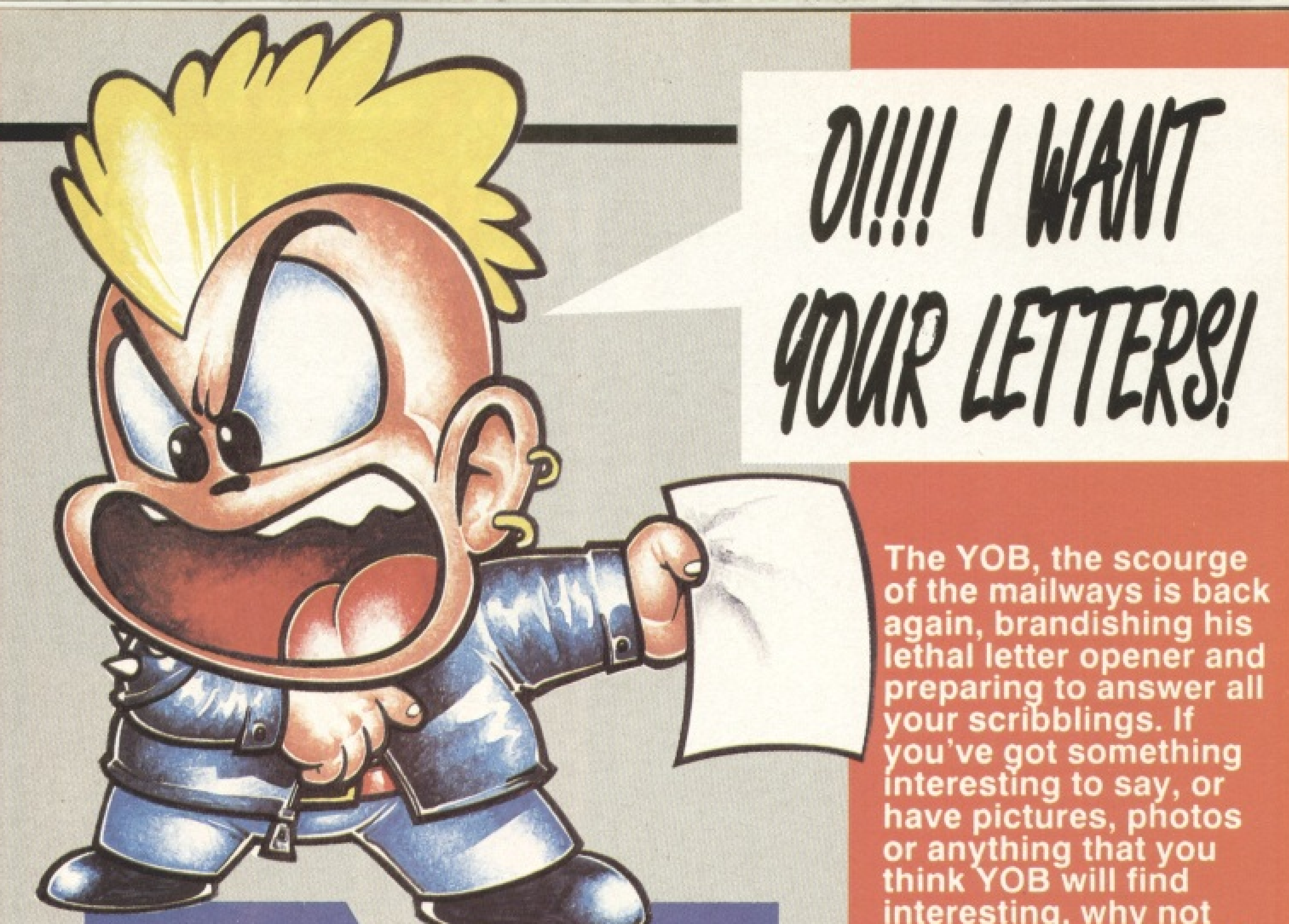
Mega Man's a joy to control, and getting your hands on the extra weapons makes it even better!

LASTABILITY 93%

Nine levels to keep you going and they're aren't easy. If you do complete the game, why not try adjusting the difficulty level?

OVERALL 95%

A totally amazing NES platform game that simply MUST be purchased as soon as possible!



MEAN YOB!

The YOB, the scourge of the mailways is back again, brandishing his lethal letter opener and preparing to answer all your scribblings. If you've got something interesting to say, or have pictures, photos or anything that you think YOB will find interesting, why not send it to: MEAN YOB, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. The best letter of the month gets £150.00 worth of console software - so get your brains in gear and get writing!

THOSE WHERE THE DAYS

Hello MEAN fellow,
I haven't seen my first letter printed yet but so what eh? Anyway an article in issue one made me think. Yes, I did eat all my rusks last night. The article concerned was about consoles we once loved, the console under the spotlight: the good old Atari VCS.

Once upon a time when I lived in London I used to own one of these beauties. The Atari cost my Mum and Dad £100.00 from our local dealer and I loved it. The free game was Combat; there were 27 types of shooting to be done with tanks and planes and in those days, when Breakout and Invaders ruled the roost, it was the business. The cartridges were about £30.00 a throw and I eventually built up a good collection with the likes of River Raid, Pitfall, and Frogger.

TIme went on and the VCS was replaced by a 64 which in turn was replaced by an ST. Now I've come full circle and returned to consoles with a Megadrive.

The point I'm trying to make is that console games aren't expensive. I paid £30.00 to £40.00 for games about a decade ago for 4k of blocky graphics, bleeps and whistles. Now for the same price you can get the best that the Land of the Rising Sun can offer.

I think that consoles will clean up the market and computers will be confined to offices. Soon everybody will be able to play an exact copy of their favourite arcade machine in their own home. All I can say is how marvellous this will be.

Dave Birch, Boston, Lancs

YOB: Marvellous indeed. The price of gaming has gone down, relatively speaking, and quality has improved massively - nowadays you can spend £35.00 on a conversion and get a game identical to the one in a coin-op cabinet. I disagree with your thoughts that consoles will completely take over the market - there'll always be a place for computers. By the way, it'd be nice to have that sheer amount of game variety that early VCS titles offered - Asteroids had 144 game variations. How about it programming people?

I CAN'T TEST THE GAMES

Dear MEAN YOB!
Congratulations on giving us such a good mag on consoles which has been needed for a while now. Again I see that Julian Rignall is part of another great mag.

But I'm annoyed. I went around the computer shops in my area and saw Megadrives, Nintendos, and Master Systems all lined up next to each other. But guess what! There were all turned off! Instead of showing the graphics, sound and gameplay, all they showed was a blank screen.

If you're lucky a sales assistant comes and turns it on. But then the problems really start because you get a waffled and stretched-out explanation of what the machine is capable of.

I now have a UK Megadrive which I will be able to use at Christmas. But again the problems start. You go to ask if you could quickly test a game to see whether you like it, but all you get is that stare that means "you must be joking".

Admittedly not all places are like this. But why can't they understand that not everybody wants a free play, with no intention of buying a game?

Stephen Jones, Pontesbury, Shrewsbury

YOB: It's a flippin' disgrace when you can't see a game before you buy it. It's a problem with large chain stores - but most smaller specialist computer shops will be more than happy to show your their wares. The best thing to do is wave your wad under the shopkeeper's nose and say, "this could all be yours... but I want to see what I'm buying first - and don't waffle me out, shopkeeper dude".

DISAPPOINTED WITH SEGA GAMES

Dear MEAN YOB,

I am a disappointed owner of a Sega Master System and I am looking forward to getting a Megadrive from my Dad. The problem with the Sega is that the games are too easy and repetitive. I have completed Double Dragon in a day, Golden Axe in a day and a half, etc. Are the games on the Megadrive any harder and more exciting? I also want to know if the Power Base Converter is worth getting.

Andrew Steele, Kent

YOB: Well, for a start, if you're a disappointed Sega owner, what's the point of buying a Power Base Converter if all you can do with it is plav Sega games? Doh! Megadrive games tend to have multiple difficulty levels, so you can up the level to suit yourself - Jazza spoke about it in his editorial last month. You're obviously a good player, so when we review a game, check out the difficulty rating to help you to choose a game that's medium/hard and not easy.

A PROUD MEGADRIVE OWNER

Dear MEAN YOB,

By the time you read this letter I will be the proud owner of a Megadrive and there are a few things that I find only the YOB could answer.

There is no denying that Megadrive software is a bit pricey for the average pocket money from stingy parents. So what I want to know is if the old software will become cheaper or new budget titles may arrive.

I desperately would like a driving game for my Megadrive, so please could you tell me what, in your respected opinion (creep), is your favourite racing game?

Oh and MEAN MACHINES is the wickedest console mag around - when can I subscribe?

Austin Stanniland, Retford, Notts

YOB: Super Monaco GP is the best Megadrive racing game around. Software might come down in price - but not for at least 18 months, so you'd better get saving.

MARKS TOO LOW?

Dear Well 'ard mega YOB!

How come reviews in C+VG are higher than those in MEAN MACHINES eg Golden Axe: C+VG's Overall rating was 95%, MEAN MACHINES Overall rating was 91%?

From your greatest fan,

Michael Greenow, Shirley, Solihull

YOB: Opinions differ, old chum. We use a democratic proportional marks system - on MEAN MACHINES both reviewers fight and have punch-ups and come up with a mark that they're both happy with. However on C+VG, it's just one person's view. However, C+VG's system is soon to be changed...

CONFESSION TIME

Dear MEAN YOB,

Forgive me YOB, for I have sinned. My confession is that while I was away on holiday last month I missed the first issue of MEAN MACHINES. I ask myself how could I do such a thing, if issue two is anything to go by.

Because of my great sin I have missed the fabulous screenshots (more than the usual 2-3 in most mags), the excellent reviews and rating system, the brilliant news section, and much, much more.

The magazine brought me back from the edge of abandoning the console scene altogether. But your mag has shown me the true path.

I must humbly ask if there is a possibility of obtaining a back issue?

Yours hopefully,

Paul Welsh, Lavenham, Suffolk

YOB: Do ten Male Hairies, then stick a cheque or postal order for £2.50 (made payable to MEAN MACHINES) in the post and send it off to: BACK ISSUES, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. And get a move on, because stocks are low.



MEAN MACHINES REVIEWED

Dear YOB,

I think MEAN MACHINES is totally mega so I decided to review it, so here goes:

PRESENTATION 98%

Brilliant reviews and previews and loadsa screenshots, just what everyone wants! Occasionally let down by hard-to-see text though.

GRAPHICS 96%

Amazingly brill pics, mostly very small, but a few huge ones to be found.

SOUND 1%

The occasional rustle, but that's as far as it goes!

PLAYABILITY 99%

Wickedly easy to read, funny (on the odd occasion) and interesting, informative reviews.

LASTABILITY 97%

You'll still want to be reading it weeks and weeks after you buy it, even though you'll already've read it umpteen times.

OVERALL 98%

An utterly brill mag that you'd be nuts to miss.

Stevie T, Filton, Bristol

YOB: The team's egos have been so well and truly bloated by your ratings we've had to get a new front door installed so they can get them into the building.

Q+A

USER FRIENDLY

It's questions and answers time again, with another mountain of queries for me to answer. How do you think them all up? Who knows - but keep on asking, and I'll keep on answering. Except for dumbo questions like, "tell me every game that's coming out on the Megadrive", or "list every game on the Master System and how good you think they are". I said it last month, and the month before that and I'm saying it again - make your questions reasonable please, or they won't be printed!
If you've got a burning question you want the answer to, write to: JAZZA'S Q+A, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. If your questions are intelligent, I'll answer them...

IS DJ BOY ANY GOOD

Dear Jaz,
I recently bought a Megadrive and am thinking of buying DJ Boy for it. Please could you tell me if it's any good or not. And can you recommend any other games.
William King, Redcar, Cleveland
JAZ: It's not bad, but it's a bit easy. If you want to know more about it, check out the Complete Guide to Consoles Book IV - it's on-sale now and has reviews of every Megadrive game available.

TELL ME ABOUT IT...

Dear Jaz,
As I am getting a Megadrive and I am very interested in a few facts about the machine that the God-like people at Sega gave us. Firstly, what is the storage capacity of an average Megadrive cartridge? Secondly, what is the free game Altered Beast like?
Christopher Middleton, Middle Herrington, Sunderland
JAZ: A Megadrive cartridge can store up to 8-megabits of information - that's 1024K, or one megabyte as it's known in the trade. Most cartridges, though are either 2 or 4-megabits. Altered Beast is alright as a freebie - it's a good copy of a fairly ordinary arcade game - but don't expect it to keep you occupied for long.

PERIPHERAL PERIPHERY

Dear Jazza,
Apart from the CD-ROM are there any other hardware accessories coming out for the Megadrive in the near future? I think it would benefit from a four-player joystick adaptor so that multi-player games can be played.

I know you might say consoles aren't made for flight sims but how would you play one on a console without any form of keyboard? How do you save games without a disk drive? Also I have been saving my Golden Goals on Kick Off II, is this kind of saving possible if a suitable peripheral was brought out for the Megadrive?
Dave Birch, Boston, Lincs
JAZ: Rumour has it that a keyboard and disk drive are being developed for the Megadrive - but when they'll be released is a mystery. You could easily play flight simulators on a console. If you used two controllers there'd be more than enough buttons to go round - the main joystick and missile/chaff/guns could be on the one you hold, and secondary functions like thrust/map/waypoint etc could go on the other. Finally, battery-backed RAM is all you need to save games - most large RPGs already feature this system.

JUST FIVE THINGS...

Dear Jaz,
Some questions:
1. Are Ocean planning on doing any conversions as they have a library of excellent games?
2. When will Strider be officially available? I can't wait!
3. Do you know who, if anyone, has the licence for Capcom's Final Fight?
4. Are there any plans for cheaper games like the Sega Master System has?
5. And finally, are there any plans to convert the following games to Megadrive: Off Road Racer, NARC, Robocop, Pang, Gauntlet, and any Super Mario game?
David Pashute, Exeter
JAZ: 1: Ocean are working on a Nintendo version of Robocop II - but none of their back catalogue will appear in any console form apart from Robocop on the Gameboy. 2: February. 3: It's only scheduled to appear on the Super Famicom, and doesn't look like it'll appear on the Megadrive. 4: No. 5: No, no, no, no, no and no.

GAMEBOY QUERY

Dear Jazza,
1. Can I use imported cartridges on my British Gameboy?
2. When will Super Mario Bros III be released on the NES?
3. How much does the rechargeable battery pack for the Gameboy cost?
Neil Currie, Alloa, Scotland
JAZ: 1: Yes. 2: Later this year - hurrah! 3. Check your Gameboy stockist and ask there.

BASEBALL FAN WANTS IT BAD

Dear Jaz,
I have just purchased a Megadrive. Could you please help me; I have been a fan of American Baseball for some years, and I have played Hardball on various computer formats, the best being the Amiga.

So all I would like from you is to know what baseball games are available for the Megadrive, which are best, and why.

D Staniforth, New Moston, Manchester
JAZ: There's only one, Super League Baseball, and it's being officially released in the UK later this month (I think it costs £29.99). It's a very good version of the sport, boasts excellent graphics, animation and sound and knocks the Amiga version of Hardball for a home run. So now you know.

NINTENDO KNOW-HOW

Dear Jaz,
I am getting a Mattel version of the Nintendo. Could you please answer these questions:
1. What do you do if you want to play American or Japanese Nintendo games?
2. Are the graphics for the Mattel version worse, better or just the same as the American or Japanese versions' games?
David Moffatt, Mallaig, Scotland
JAZ: First of all Mattel versions of the Nintendo are exactly the same as any other UK Nintendo available at the moment - it's just that they were originally brought in by Mattel, not Nintendo. In answer to your first question - you wait for them to come out over here because they don't work on UK machines. And secondly, the graphics are absolutely identical to the American and Japanese versions. So stop fretting.

A CRUDE QUESTION

Dear Jaz,
For Christmas I'm getting a Megadrive and I would like to know if my favourite coin-op, Crudebusters, will be coming out for it. I think MEAN MACHINES is very smart and classy.
M Kearn, Widley, Hants
JAZ: Rumour has it that Crudebusters will appear this Autumn - keep watching MEAN MACHINES and we'll bring you a further update later on this year.

A LOAD OF SEGA STUFF

Dear Jaz,
I own a Master System and soon a Megadrive and have some questions I would like you to answer:
1. Is Bubble Bobble coming out on the Megadrive or Master System?
2. How does the Master System Light Phaser work?
3. Does the Phaser work on the Megadrive?
4. Why not have a High Score page for the consoles you review?
5. You mentioned that Sega are making a 32-bit machine - is this more powerful than the Neo-Geo console and will it have a converter like the Megadrive Power Base Converter that will run Megadrive and Master System games?
Marcel Price, Penllergaer, Swansea

JAZ: 1: No - you'll have to buy a Nintendo to play Bubble Bobble. 2: That's a stupid question to ask and you don't need to know the answer - anyway, it'd take up two pages to answer and you still wouldn't understand it. 3: No. 4: Because Terry says we can't. 5: Flipping heck! They've only just started to design the machine and you expect me to know everything about it. Wait and see.

MEGADRIVE QUICKIES

Dear Jaz,
Guess what? I've got some questions for you!
1. Do you really only get one joypad when you buy a Megadrive?
2. Will Gauntlet appear on the Megadrive?
3. Is there ever going to be a Golden Axe II?
4. When the Megadrive CD-ROM is here how much will the games cost?
Alan Warn, Cambridgeshire
JAZ: Guess what? I've got some answers for you. 1: Yep, you only get one - but you can buy extra ones on their own. 2: There are no plans at the moment. 3: Sega apparently are working on a Golden Axe II coin-op, but whether or not a conversion will ever appear on the Megadrive is another thing entirely. 4: For the last time, it'll appear during the Autumn of this year and will cost about £120.00. No more CD-ROM questions please, they're boring.

THESE ARE EXCITING

Dear Jaz,
I think MEAN MACHINES is totally great, and all other mags are useless by comparison.
1. Any chance of these on the Nintendo? Missing In Action, Aliens, Wardner.
2. What do you reckon on these? Ghosts 'n Ghouls, Kung-Fu, Metal Gear.
3. What happened to the promised First MEAN MACHINES arcades column, in issue 2?
4. Who is Dwayne Minton?
Keep up the good work!
Stuart Baulk, Hemel Hempstead, Herts
JAZ: 1: Aliens might appear later this year, but the rest are doubtful. 2: All pretty naff - get Megaman 2 or Snake, Rattle 'n' Roll instead. 3: It was dropped in favour of extra reviews. 4: He's a thickie everyone hates - if you see him, stay away 'cos he smells.

LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

Dear Jaz,
Please could you tell me if a Light Gun is coming out for the Megadrive.
Sian Jame, Mid Glam, South Wales
JAZ: As far as I know, there won't ever be a lightgun for the Megadrive.



TIPS

MEGADRIVE

CYBERBALL
Can't be bothered to work your way through the game? Well, K Worral or Preston, Lancs has a useful little tip. Enter this code:

65BB BXII BFEX.

It will take you to the Superbowl match, and if you win you'll be treated to an end of game sequence!

ARNOLD PALMER'S GOLF
To access a secret game of Fantasy Zone, start a new game, and take 100 strokes on any hole (without sinking the ball). The words Game Over will appear: press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, and Button A. Now you're in Fantasy Zone! What a whopper, eh?

GHOST BUSTERS
Lee Westwood also has a cheat for this film game. Enter DN as your initials and then the following code:
315879632.

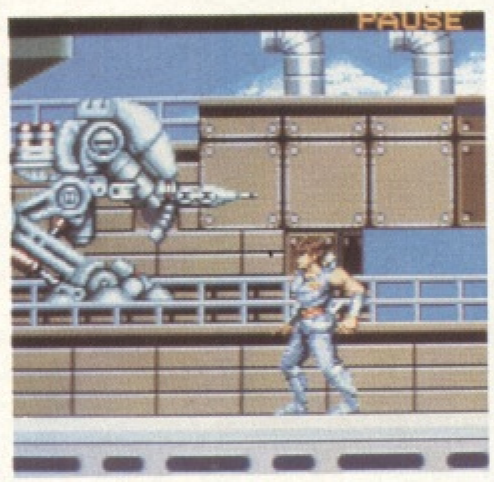


SUPER HANG-ON
Lee Westwood, who lives in Dagenham, Essex has a crusty of cheat for all you bike freaks out there. On the title screen hold down A, B, C, and start, and a menu appears allowing you to choose the level, time, sounds, and the text to English (if on an imported machine). To complete the game in original mode enter this code:

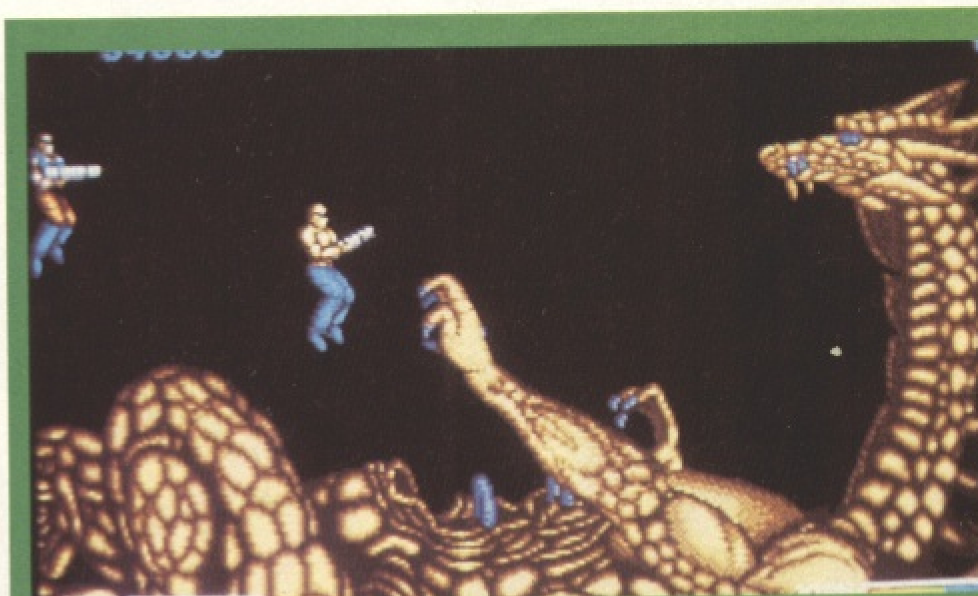
5FF3F546F35564 FFOSLPIMFJQNKS.

THUNDERFORCE III
Salman Khalique of Hampstead, London has a quickie for fans of this great blaster. When the Emergency warning comes up on the Haides level, go to the right of the screen - the boss enters from the left. To get all the weapons pause the game then press Up 10 times and then press Down and B continuously until all the weapons appear.

At the end of the Orn Base, during the Emergency stage, wait for the four blocks to appear, then pause the game. You'll notice that each block has four arrows on it; the yellow arrow shows which one will move next, and where.

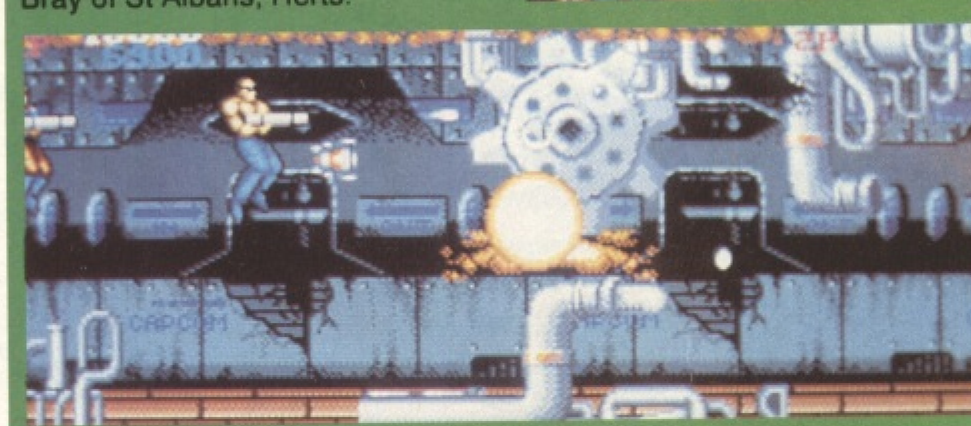


STRIDER
At the beginning of the game, while the Master is laughing, press the joypad down, then press Buttons A, C, B, C, and A: you should now be able to start where you died, with full energy. Thanks to Daniel Bertozzi of St Saviour in Jersey for that.



FORGOTTEN WORLDS
In two-player mode, let one player collect all the zennies so that he buys all the best equipment in the shop. At the end of the level, make sure the poor player dies, and he will appear just after the start of the next level with all the equipment of the rich player! Cheers and all that to Duncan Bray of St Albans, Herts.





USER FRIENDLY

Happy New Year! We kick off 1991 with a pretty spectacular tips section. Not only do we have a load of highly useful mini-tips, but we've also got super-duper Ghostbusters tips to help you Megadrive players out there. If you're a dab hand, as they say, with a joypad, why not write in to MEAN MACHINES and share your secrets with the rest of the universe? We'll definitely print your tips if they're any good, and if they're the best we receive that month, you could even win the monthly prize of £150.00 worth of console software for your machine! So get your writing trousers on and send your tips or maps to: MEAN MACHINES TIPS, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.



GHOSTB



The weak spot on this scaly spectre is its spine. However this is protected by a hard skin which must be zapped away before the 'Buster can damage the creature. The spectre attacks with dart-like scales which can be shot or avoided.

Stay to the right of the screen when fighting the snowman. Shots to its lower body are the best bet for destroying it. Eliminate the miniature snowmen quickly but avoid their deadly carrot-noses!

The ghoul hides in the magician's top hat, appearing for a few seconds at a time, so be ready to attack. Firing diagonally at the head inflicts the most damage. When the ghoul breaks free of the hat, attack both its head and the body in a similar fashion.

The seemingly indestructible ice demon should be attacked at its head; the demon is very tall, so don't attempt to jump over it. If trapped in a corner, wait until it leaps into the air to allow the 'Buster to crawl underneath it.

BUSTERS



Staying on the platform opposite the fiery face helps in avoiding its attacks. The face can be defeated by shooting at its mouth - so keep on your toes!

Keeping to the centre of the screen is the best way of avoiding the colossal arms of Mr Staypuft. Shoot at his face, and when its eyes glow be ready to evade its deadly laser beams.

Attack the fire dragon's head and avoid its fiery breath. Nothing could be simpler!

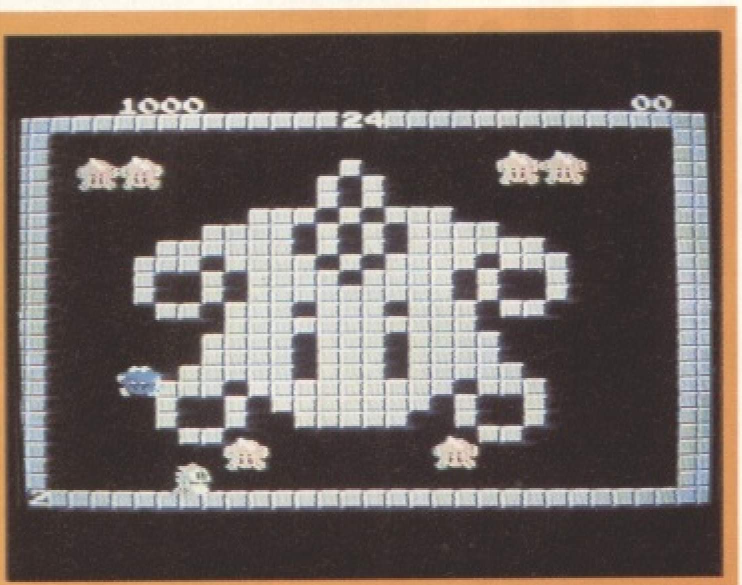
The flying Cyclops has a protective shell which only opens to allow it to fire a powerful laser. When this happens, move away and fire diagonally into its green body.

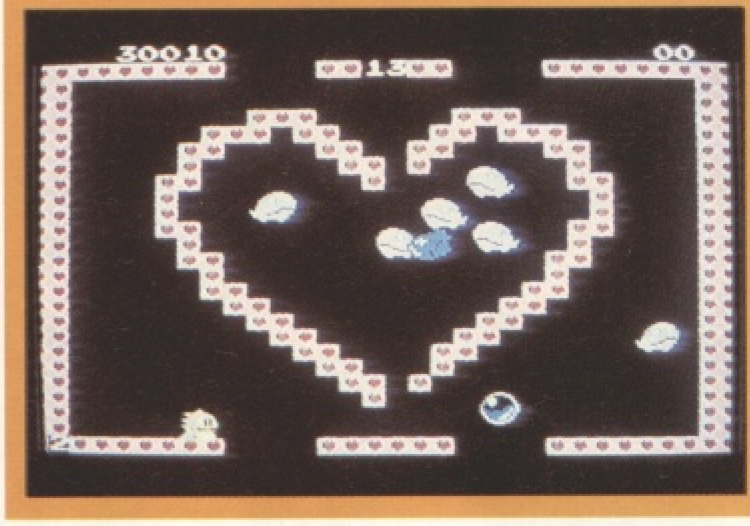
秘技 NINTENDO TIPS

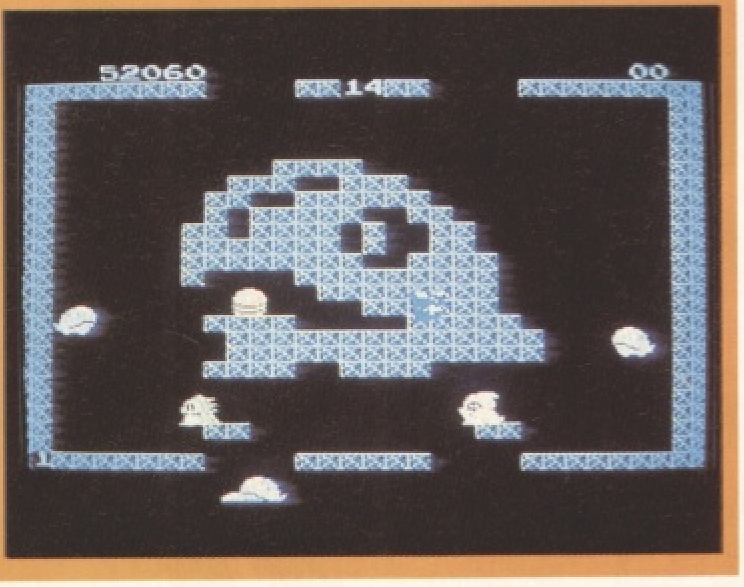
BUBBLE BOBBLE

This incredibubble game contains 2 worlds - Bubble Bobble and Super Bubble Bobble, each with 113 levels! Quite a handful, but these handy codes, sent in by Matthew Johnson of St Helens in Merseyside will let you see some of the later screens:

EECJJ: Level 112 on Bubble Bobble.
BBAJI: Level 1 on Super Bubble Bobble.
FCGFJ: Level 61 on Super BB.
EECFG: Level 112 on Super BB.

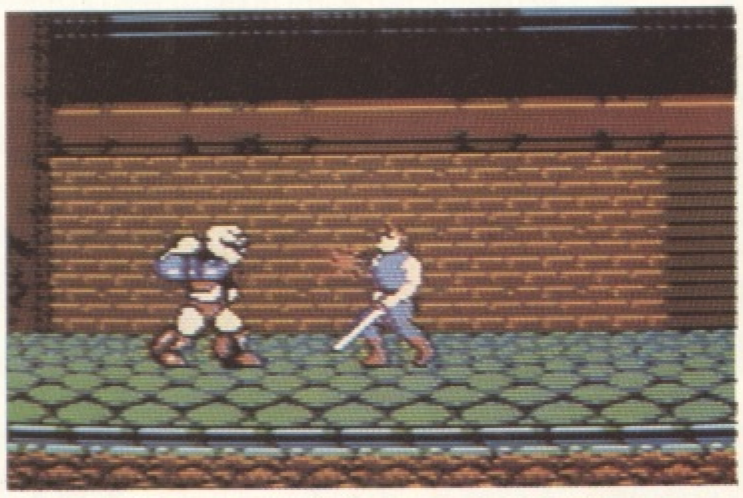






SLAP SHOT

When playing from right to left and pucking off (oops, must be careful not to mis-type that), get the puck to the player at the top of the screen (button 2 should do this). Now run it forward to the half-way line and press Button 1. Providing the game's on a low league setting, the puck should go straight into the goal!



TROJAN

To gain a continue press up and start simultaneously on the game over screen. Paul Evans from Quinton in Birmingham sent that in, so mucho gratias to him.

GAMEBOY

NEMESIS

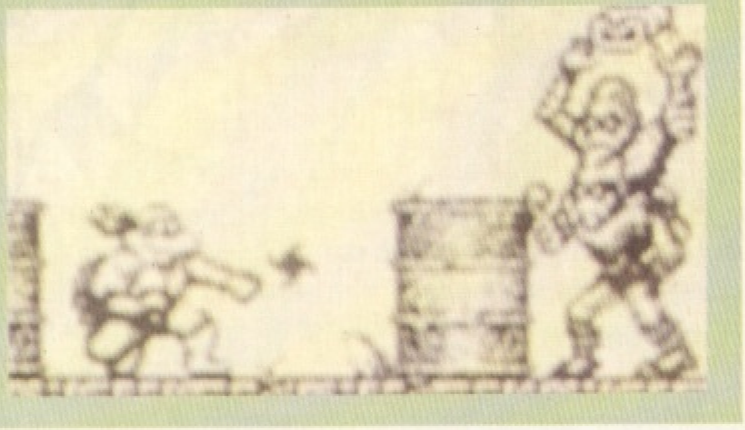
Salman Khalique of Hampstead in London has a neat cheat that lets you gain all the weapons. Pause the game and press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A, B and A, and lo and behold, mega-destructive powers are yours for the using and abusing.

TETRIS

Here's a cheat that makes the game harder! Press down and start on the title screen, and you'll get a little heart by the level number while playing - this means level 9 becomes level 19, etc (and virtually impossible, needless to say). Glen Uren from Woolford in sunny Lancashire supplied that.

TURTLES

To choose any bonus level, press Select on the configuration screen, then A and B while still holding the Select button. A question mark should appear at the end, choose this and you will have a bonus level of you choice! You can thank Delroy Bennett of Smethwick, Warley for sending that in.



MASTER SYSTEM

TRANSBOT

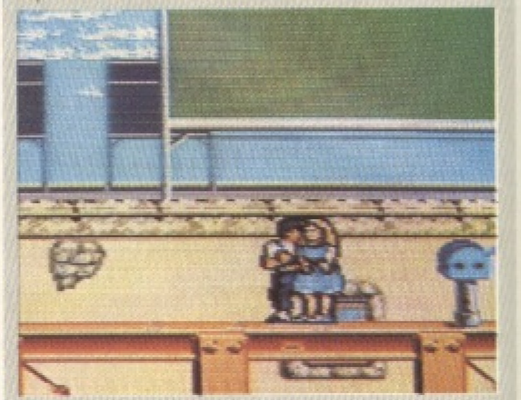
Here's a quick one from Paul Elmore of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire for this rather crappy little shoot 'em up. The easiest way to kill the final monster is to use Firepower A for normal fire, and Firepower B for beam.

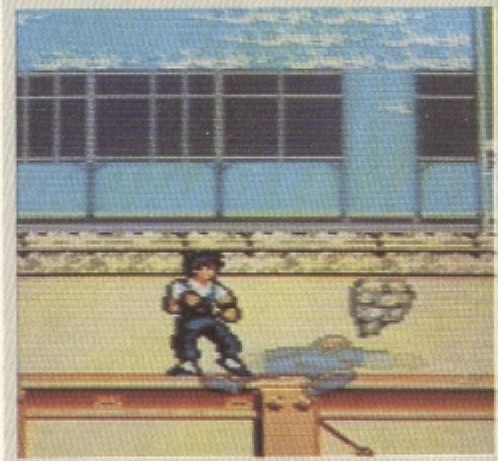
CAPTAIN SILVER

This game is a right load of tosh. However, if you're lumbered with in and want to continue after you've died, press up and both buttons at the same time and you can restart. Hooray! Oh yes, Lee Westwood of Dagenham, Essex was the kind soul who supplied that.

VIGILANTE

To get to any level, push the joypad top left, and push Buttons 1 and 2 at the same time. Tony Bishorek from Belfast sent that one in.





QUARTET

To begin the game with wider shots, press pause 14 times when the title screen is showing. Mark Jones and Simon Donavon from Leicester were the kind dudes who posted that one to us.


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"DO ME A FAVOUR...
PLUG ME INTO A SEGA"

USER FRIENDLY

TIPS H

Can't find that vital super sword to beat the final guardian in your favourite game? Are you constantly being beaten by some seemingly indestructible super-baddie or other? Well, here's where your problems can be sorted. Write in to the MEAN MACHINES Tips Helpline with your question, and Julian "Jaz" Rignall, Captain of the UK Video Game team will see if he can supply you the answer. If not, we'll throw the question open to other readers, who might be able to help. Write to: MEAN MACHINES TIPS HELPLINE, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

Oh, by the way. When you write in, don't just say "I'm stuck in Shinobi (or whatever), please help me". I need to know what your exact problem is, otherwise I won't be able to answer! Okay? Also, state what machine the game is on. I had a letter from Hiuman Lee this month asking for help on Batman - was it on the Megadrive, Nintendo or Gameboy. I'm not a flipping mind reader - so make sure you write with all the details otherwise you won't get any help! Finally - don't send me any stamped addressed envelopes - I don't reply personally 'cos I haven't got the time. Only send a stamped addressed envelope if you're writing to a Megaplayer.

NOT VERY Y'S

Dear Jaz,
Is there a trick to defeat the final boss, Dast Dark, in Y's. I'm completely stuck. I hope you can help.
Luigi Ruffaldi, Firenze, Italy

JAZ: Before confronting him, equip yourself with all Silver Arms. Touch him and the platform will take off and fly into space. He starts flying around throwing fireballs. When he's touched, a part of the floor disappears and cannot be walked on. Use this strategy. Touch him when he's at the edge of the screen so you don't knock out the centre first, making it difficult to run around. Make every hit count. If possible follow him around the screen constantly touching him. Once he's defeated, the last book hidden in his cloak is received.

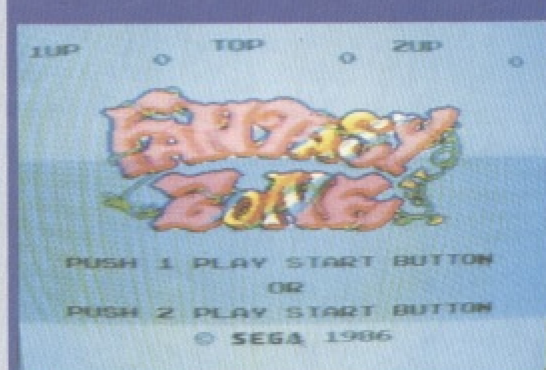
PHANTASY STAR PROBLEM

Dear Jaz,
I can't get the hovercraft.
He-e-e-elp!
Daniel McDonagh, Benfleet, Essex

JAZ: When you buy the Landrover, talk to the village about the hovercraft. When he asks if you've heard of the hovercraft, say "yes". Return to Uzo and talk to the villagers. One tells you where the flute is buried. Return to Bortevo junkyard and enter the very first house of Alis' left. Go in and search and you'll automatically receive the hovercraft.

GRIM REAPER WHIPPED

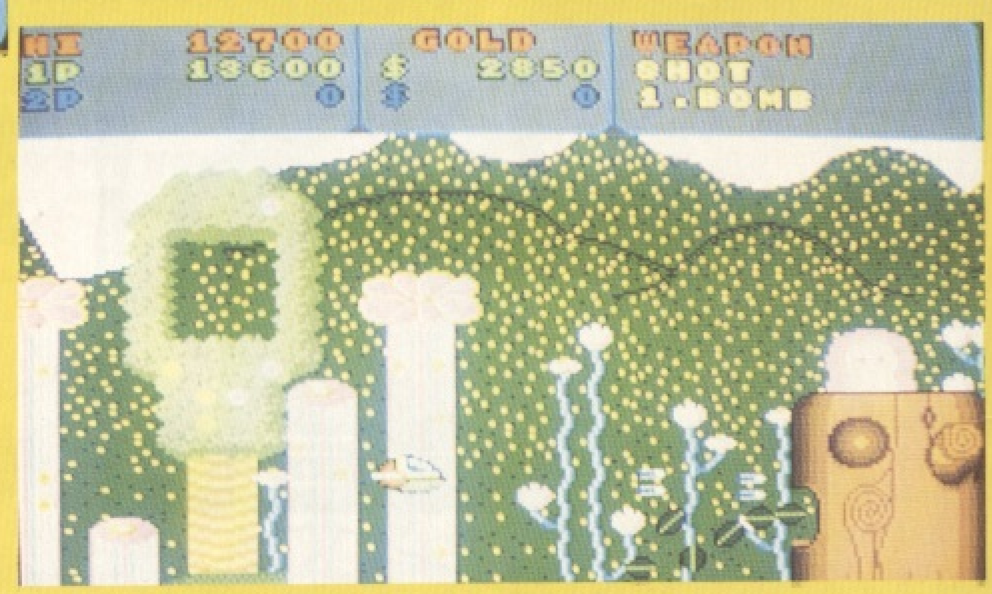
In issue two, Justin Lane requested help on Castlevania, but I couldn't help. However, **Darren Booy** has the answer. He says the best weapon to use against the Grim Reaper is the triple-shot boomerang. Quickly go to the middle platform, face to the right, jump and shoot three times. Then jump to the left platform, stand against the wall and shoot again. When the sickles appear, jump down to avoid the ones overhead and whip any that come towards you. Now return to the left platform and continue the attack. Keep shooting and the Grim Reaper will be destroyed.



A FEEBLE PROBLEM

Dear Jaz,
No matter what I do, I can't get past the huge creature at the end of round one on Fantasy Zone on the Master System.
Clive Wraight, Reading, Berks

JAZ: Just shoot it rapidly in the mouth and dodge the things that come out. It's as simple as that.



ELPLINE

YOUR ANSWERS

KUNG-FU KO

Last month Ryan Krum wrote in to say that he was having problems with the end-of-level baddie on round five on Kung-Fu Kid. I couldn't help him, but **David Abbot** of Loughborough, Leics can. He says jump his fire and go towards the demon. Sweep kick him and he'll lose a bit of energy. Keep on doing that and he eventually dies.



WE WANT MEGAPLAYERS

If you're a gamesplaying genius, why not put your name forward for the MEAN MACHINES Tips Helpline. Just write in with your name and address and tell us which games you're good at. We'll print your details in the magazine so that other fellow players can write to you for help - you might even make new friends!!! The place to send all your Tips Helpline letters is: MEGAPLAYERS TIPS HELPLINE, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

MEAN MACHINES MEGAPLAYERS

Here's where you ace gamesplayers can offer your services and become an honorary MEAN MACHINES Megaplayer. Other readers can write to you and ask for information on games that you know inside out. If you write to a Megaplayer, don't forget to include a stamped addressed envelope! It's nice enough for these people to put their names forward to help you - it's a bit of a cheek asking them to pay to send you a reply!

Carl Busby is a pretty good player. His specialised games are: Alex Kidd and the Lost Stars, Altered Beast, Spy Vs Spy, Basketball Nightmare, Psycho Fox, Pro Wrestling and Wonderboy III. If you need any help on those games, write to him at 293 Western Avenue, Acton, London, W3 OPP.

Nintendo players can also ask Carl Busby for help. He knows Ghosts 'n' Goblins, Megaman, Balloon Fight, Rygar, Super Mario II, Excitebike and Batman. Write to him on the address above.

If you're stuck on Y's, Spellcaster, Phantasy Star, Ghostbusters, Rambo III, Rampage, Alex Kidd in High-Tech World, Wonderboy I, II and III, Golvellius, Shinobi, Psycho Fox, Kung-Fu or RC Grand Prix, why not write to Mark Betts, Cobblers, Chapel Road, Lower Southrepps, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 18W?

A Sega Master System Megaplayer who knows a wealth of games is Robert Williams of 42 Kenneth Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex, RM6 6LL. He knows Psycho Fox, Golden Axe, Rastan, R-Type, Wonderboy III, World Soccer, Shinobi, Thunderblade, Alex Kidd and the Lost Stars, Dynamite Dux, Aztec Adventure, Outrun and California Games. If you're stuck on any of those games, why not write to him?

If you live in Berkshire or thereabouts, Peter Nightingale, 44 Melling Close, Lower Early, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 2XN might have the answers you're looking for. He knows the following Nintendo games - Trojan, Super Mario Bros, Soccer, Tiger Heli, Xevious, Airwolf and Skate or Die.

Another Nintendo Megaplayer is John Molnar of 64 Champion Close, Rowlatts Hill, Rowatts Hill, Leicester, LE5 4EX. He's an expert on Super Mario Bros I and II, Batman, Cobra Triangle, Pro Wrestling, Track and Field II, Gunsmoke, Life Force, Rush 'n' Attack, Tennis and Gradius.

Ah! A Megadrive Megaplayer. If you've got yourself into a fix on ESWAT, DJ Boy, Golden Axe, Final Blow, Super Shinobi, Super Real Basketball, World Championship Soccer or Mr Komatsue, write to Jacob Kennedy, 74 Esmond Road, Chiswick, London, W4 1JF.

Calvin Holbrook of 3 Wilton Road, Shanklin, Isle of Wight, POS7 7DA is a Sega Megaplayer, and is offering advice to anyone who writes to him. He knows Wonderboy I, II and III, Alex Kidd in Miracle World, Ghost House, Phantasy Star and Alex Kidd in High-Tech World.

If you're having hassle with any of these Sega titles: Afterburner, Outrun, Choplifter, Double Dragon, Captain Silver, Wonderboy II, Enduro Racer, Vigilante, Rampage, California Games, Miracle Warriors, Scramble Spirits, My Hero, Fantasy Zone, Alex Kidd in Shinobi World or Global Defence, write to Hassan Sasid-Ude, 8 Caburn Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 6EF.

Alan Frost is a Megadrive player par excellence. He knows Golden Axe, Moonwalker, Rambo III, Batman, Forgotten Worlds. Write to him at 1 Huntspiel Cott, Brunswick Road, Deepcut, Camberley, Surrey, GU16 6RT.

Another Megaplayer volunteer is James Smith, 2B Balcarres Road, Musselburgh, East Lothian, Scotland. He's a whizz on the following Sega games: Choplifter, Afterburner, Alex Kidd in High-Tech World, Rambo III, Double Dragon, Wonderboy, Bomber Raid and Kung-Fu Kidd.

Any one who needs help on Basketball Nightmare, California Games, Golden Axe, Rastan, Shinobi, Vigilante, World Soccer, Super Tennis or Rescue Mission can write off to Paul Hanson, 37 Penhurst Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP3 8QY.

If you're a Megadrive player in dire straits, why not get into contact with Paul Bristow, 60 Plaxtol Road, Erith, Kent, DA8 1NL. He's an expert on Ghouls 'n' Ghosts, Thunderforce III, Psycho Fox, Operation Wolf, Super Real Basketball, World Games, Forgotten Worlds and Strider.

Don't forget - and this is very important indeed - if you write to a Megaplayer, make sure you enclose a stamped addressed envelope for your reply, or you won't get one. Okay?

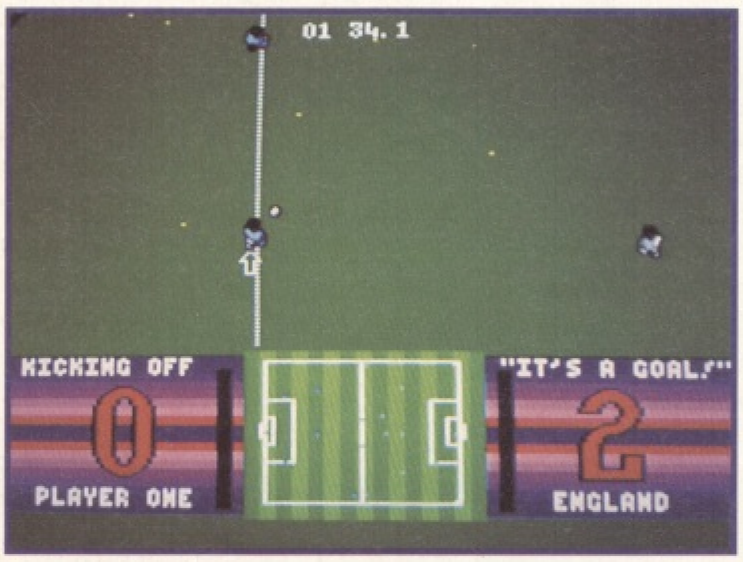
GX4000
REVIEW

Gazza

Back in the summer, during the World Cup, one player hit the headlines for crying. Noted for the outstanding quality of his football, the short, chubby man has made millions from his cult following as well as his footballing skills. But enough about Maradona, this game stars Gazza, or Paul Gascoigne as he's known to his fans, in Empire's second title featuring the jocular grinning Geordie.

The pitch is viewed from the side (as if the viewers were in the expensive seats), with the pitch horizontally scrolling as the ball is kicked around. At the bottom of the screen lies the radar, which is useful in determining the position of players when the ball is kicked beyond the part of the pitch being shown.

An arrow shows which player is currently under control, and the direction the ball travels when passed. A useful "boot-o-meter" measures the strength of each shot by the length of time the button is depressed (poor thing). If in one-player mode, the choice of opposition includes teams as wide-ranging in talent as Rumania and Brazil. Kick offs, corners, and goal kicks are all included, so don't get lost in the fog on the Tyne - just yer toongue oot!



▲ *England winning? It must be a computer fantasy game!*

COMMENT



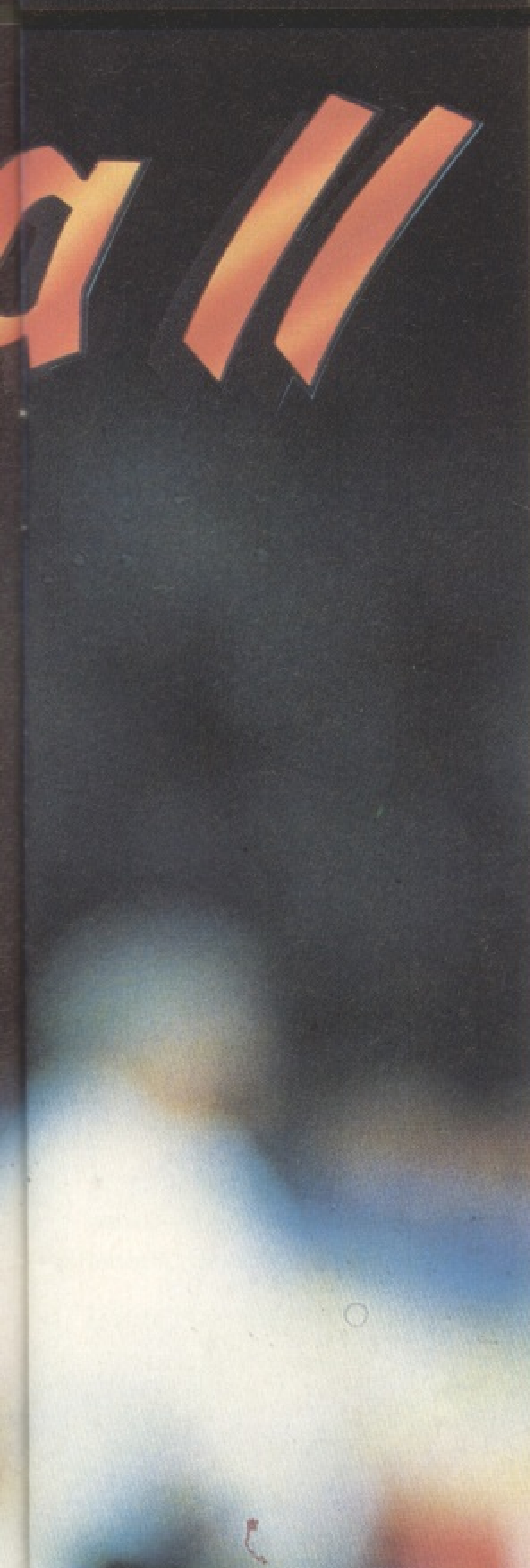
JULIAN

When you first see this, it looks like a super horizontally scrolling Kick Off II - the action is fast and the graphics are very smooth! However, start playing and some major shortfalls become apparent. The goalies are hopeless - shoot diagonally and a goal is guaranteed, and the way the players patrol the pitch is completely unintelligent. There aren't any penalties or free kicks either, which is another negative point. I also don't like the way the ball sticks to the players' feet - but I suppose that's just personal preference. It's a shame these niggles are present, because they detract from the great graphics and excellent control method. Football-starved GX4000 owners might like to give this a go - but don't expect the world.



STOP YOUR SOBBING

Paul Gascoigne first caught the public eye when he started playing with Newcastle United as an apprentice in the mid 'eighties. He moved to Tottenham Hotspur in the 1988 season where he soon became a star player, and he was chosen for the England squad in the 1990 World Cup. His abilities, together with his natural self-promotion, soon made him a national hero - especially when he cried after his booking in the semi-finals. Since then, he has made a fortune through licensing and endorsements, as well as personal appearances and even "singing" on records. But, as Bobby Robson said, he's still as daft as a brush.





RADAR LOVE

The radar is located at the bottom of the screen, between the two scorecards. Each team is shown in a particular colour, although sometimes the colours are fairly similar, causing confusion. The radar allows the player to see where his or her team is located, so that passes can be made without the opposition intercepting the ball - well, that's the theory at least!

▼ *Cameroon begin their attack in the midfield.*





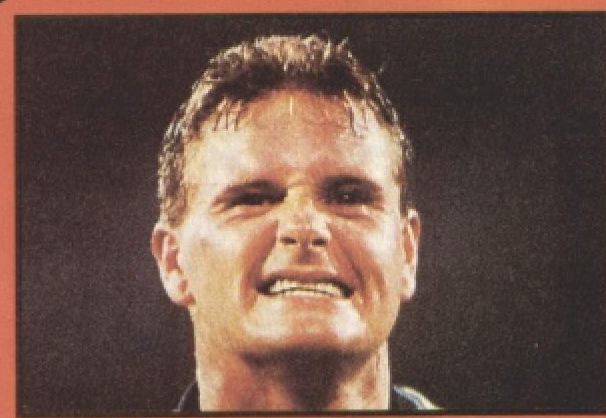


COMMENT



MATT

Haway, mon, de ye leek me geem? Well, sorry Gazza, it's a little disappointing in some respects. The lack of intelligent zoning and goalkeeping means that none of the players are where you'd like them to be (especially the goalie). Despite this, the game has some excellent features too; the boot-o-meter allows reasonable control over the power of shots, and the radar, when the colours don't merge too much, helps to plan passes and attacks. The tackling is fairly well implemented, preventing a player from just strolling down the middle of the pitch and taking a shot (a fault in many other footie games). So the game has its strengths, but it's a shame that the weaknesses prevent this from being a classic.



BY: EMPIRE
PRICE: £24.99
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY
LIVES: N/A
CONTINUES: N/A
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: FAST

1-2 PLAYERS

PRESENTATION 78%

A digitised piccie of Gazza lets you know the star of the game. Weird option screen though.

GRAPHICS 83%

The straightforward sprites and pitch add clarity, although they tend to be somewhat basic.

SOUND 75%

Simple effects, such as booting the ball, are unintrusive - but the tune is as melodic as Gazza's single (ie not at all).

PLAYABILITY 80%

The control method takes some getting used to, but works well.

LASTABILITY 72%

With a World Cup-style option and variable match length, this is a game with balls.

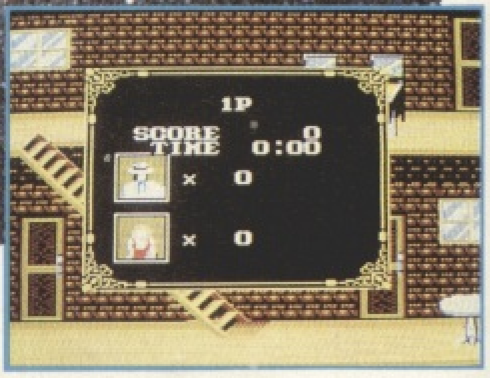
OVERALL 76%

A potentially brilliant football game let down by several annoying faults.

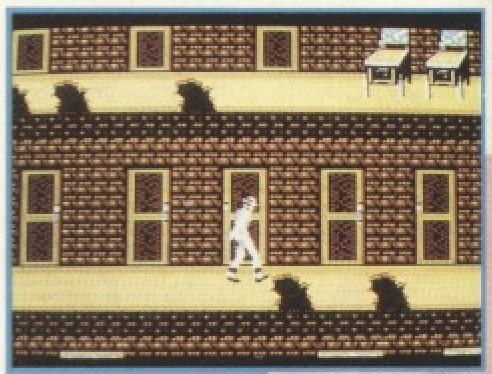
MOONWALKER



▲ Mr Big has a walk-on part at the end of each round.



▲ Things don't look good for Michae



▲ Owww! Watch the floor, Michael!



The plastic pop star strikes back! Michael Jackson, all-round good guy and champion of "the kids" makes it to his own console game, based on the "massive" movie.

In case you didn't know, Mr Big has kidnapped all of the kids and is ready to subject them to the horrors of drugs! Michael is a bit miffed at this to say the least, and pausing only to jump into his Smooth Criminal designer gear, decides to risk five levels of Mr Big's domain in an effort to rescue the kids and bring Mr Big to justice. Hooray!

There's four rounds to each level and in each, Michael has to run around the platform environment dishing out magical death to any crony that decides to cross his path. Our hero must search the level, opening doors and moving scenery to find and rescue the kids. When all the kids have been safely rescued, Mr Big appears and sends some of his most terrifying henchmen to try and dispatch Michael.

When they're safely out of the way, it's on to the next round with yet more kids to rescue. Each level has its own Michael soundtrack, including the funky Smooth Criminal, Beat It and Bad!

MICHAEL MAGIC

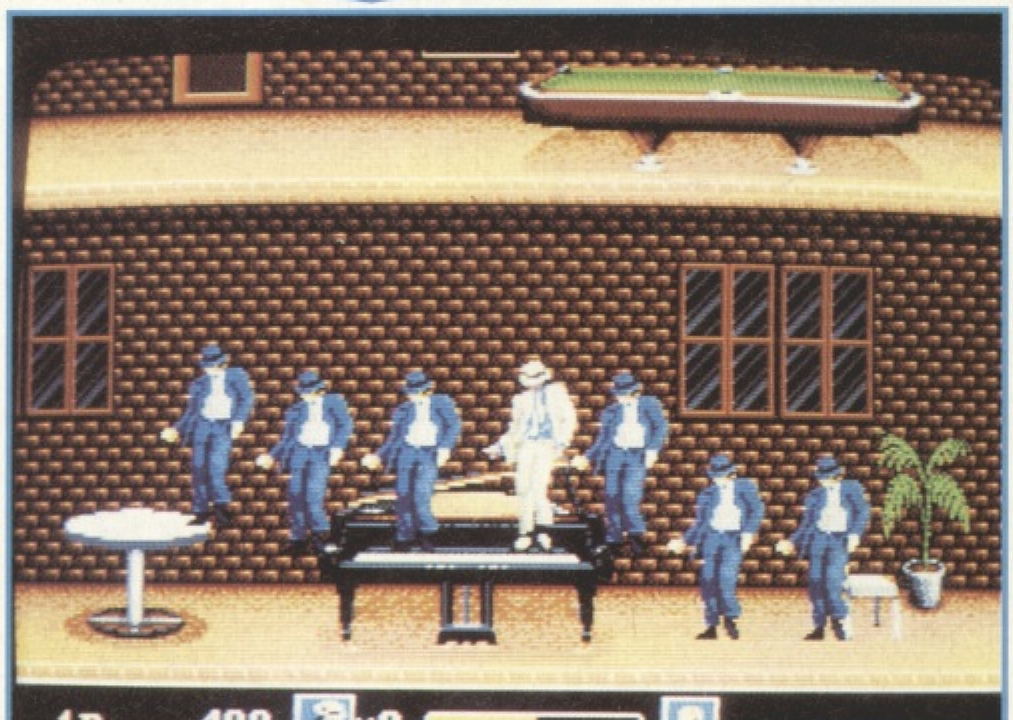
If the screen is full of nasty creatures intent on Michael's destruction, there's one way to send them all packing. Jackson likes to strut his thang occasionally, but in this game his dancing has a remarkable smart bomb effect on everything on the screen! On the Megadrive version, the enemy sprites even join in before meeting their doom! A different form of Michael's magic involves him dispatching his hat on a mission of destruction. The Megadrive version has this available from the start of the game. On the Master System though, the option to use the hat only becomes available after Michael has found the appropriate icon - but it doesn't use any up any of Michael's magic reserve like it does on the 16-bit game.

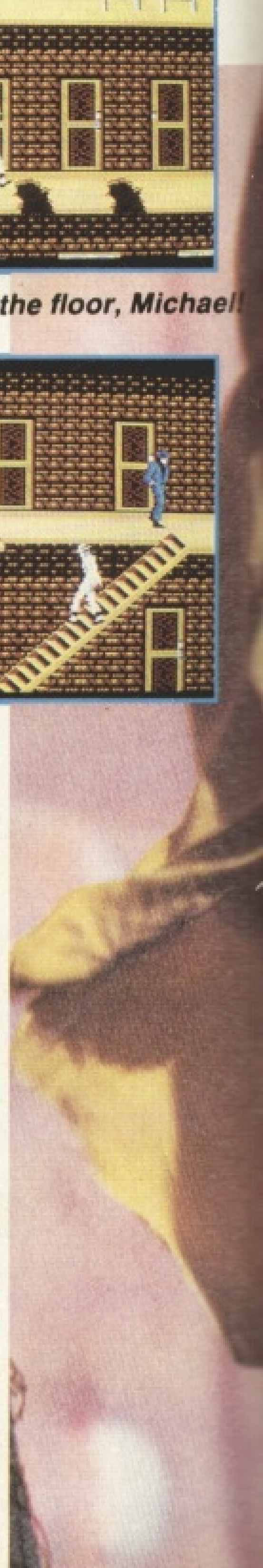
SEGA COMMENT



MATT

The Master System version of Moonwalker manages to capture just about everything from the Megadrive game, and even manages to add some features that weren't in the original. There's only a couple of problems. The walk-around-and-find-the-kids gameplay is very repetitive and after a while it becomes more of a chore than anything else. Also, Megadrive Moonwalker scores because of the amazing audio-visuals. The formation dancing and Michael's various "oohs!" and "aaows!" are missing from the Master System game, and the music isn't astounding. The graphics and gameplay make the game initially very addictive though, but do try to see the game in action before purchase.

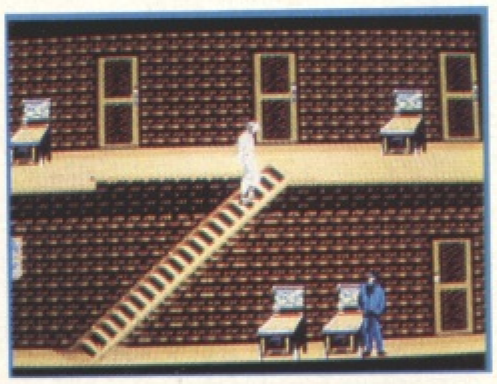




WHO'S BAD?

For each level, there's a variety of enemy sprites after the righteous pop singer turned savior. Level one sees club bouncers pursue Michael around the 21 Club, whilst the streets of level two see Michael facing up to the scum from the rough end of town (as the music reminds you, they want him to Beat It!). It's down into the graveyard for level three, where zombie refugees from the thriller video attempt to show Michael the door to death! Among the other meanies found later on in the game are poisonous spiders and rabid dogs... Pretty nasty, eh?



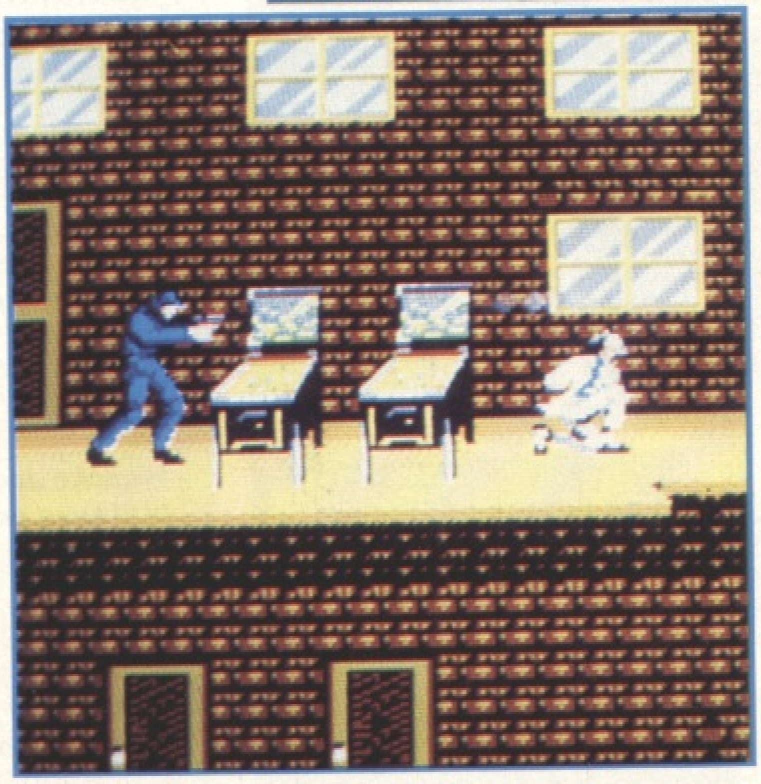


SEGA COMMENT



JULIAN

I'm amazed at how close this is to the Megadrive version - the graphics are very similar indeed, and the game plays very much in the same way. It's pretty good fun at first, and there's plenty of high-kicking action as you wend your way around the landscape freeing the kiddies from their captors. However, the difficulty level isn't set very high, so experts will find themselves completing the game pretty quickly. Moonwalker is a fun game with plenty of neat touches, but if you're a competent player, try before you buy.



MICHAEL MOVES

It's not just his petrifying voice that's lethal. In this game, Jackson has a particularly nasty line in magic that can be used to dispose of any henchmen that seek to put an end to Michael's rescue attempts. One press of the button sees Michael kick some magic at the hapless cronies. For most of the bad guys one dose is enough to send them shuffling off this mortal coil. Michael can also crouch, and from here he can punch any goons that cross his path. Whilst jumping, Jackson can also launch into a dangerous pointy-finger pose - and from that there's no escape! There's also a moonwalking move, but you're going to have to work out how to do that for yourself!



BY: SEGA
PRICE: £29.99
RELEASE DATE: FEB
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 5
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: OOOH!

1 PLAYERS

PRESENTATION 84%
Nice intro screens between levels, but little else.

GRAPHICS 86%
Life-like Jackson sprite, but not much variety in the enemy sprites.

SOUND 82%
Close Sega reproductions of Jackson hits, but accompanied by smashing effects.

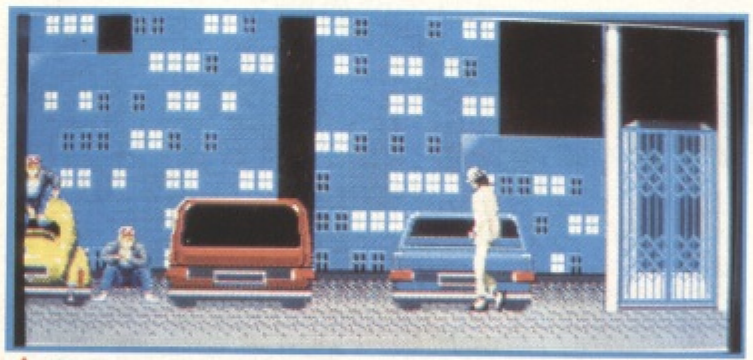
PLAYABILITY 80%
Repetitive gameplay that somehow remains quite addictive.

LASTABILITY 75%
Moonwalker's appeal wears off after a couple of weeks.

OVERALL 80%
An accomplished Jackson licence begging for a more varied game design.

ANOTHER PART OF ME

Megadrive Moonwalker is much the same as the Master System game. Although the graphics aren't significantly superior, the Megadrive game does have a bigger variety of enemy sprites, and like the plastic hero they all dance too! Another point that separates the two is the inclusion of various Jackson-esque noises (plenty of "oowwws!" for instance) and even speech. Bubbles the chimp also makes an appearance to guide Michael to the end of each round. The basic search-the-landscape-finding-kids gameplay remains the same though.



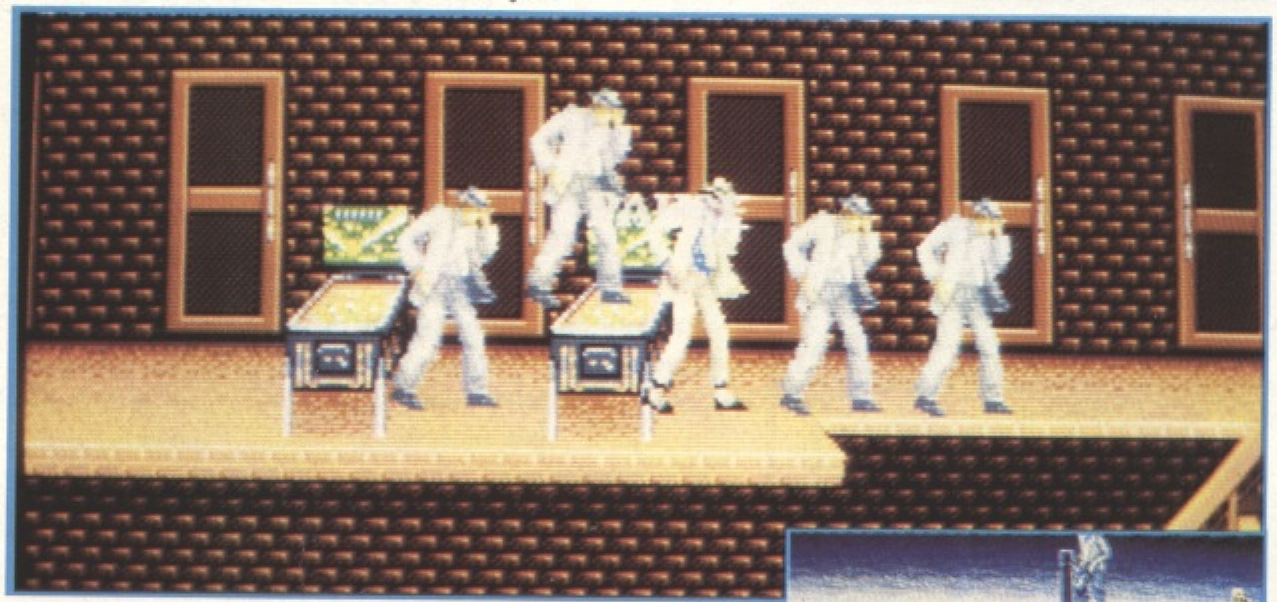
▲ *Strutting the streets Jackson-style!*

MEGADRIVE COMMENT



MATT

When Moonwalker first came into the office, it proved to be extremely popular - just for the comedy value alone. Cameo screens with an animated Michael asking "Who's Bad?" give this game a comic aspect unrivalled by any other Megadrive game. The formation dancing is great as well - even the dogs and spiders join in! However, as with the Master System version, the limited gameplay may put a lot of hardened gamesters off. Highly recommended to Jackson fans (are their any left?) who like rescuing kids.



▲ *Magical grooving with the plastic pop star!*



▲ *Checking out the graveyard on level three.*

MEGADRIVE COMMENT



JULIAN

Similar in many respects to the Master System version, but with better defined graphics and some great tunes and sampled speech (all the "aaows" and "ooohs" you could possibly want, and even a "who's bad?" thrown in for good measure), this platform game offers a load of laughs. There are some great touches, my favourite being the formation-dancing dogs when you use your magic at the end of level two - they're hilarious. Like the Master System version, Moonwalker isn't a particularly tough game, and good players might find themselves completing it all too quickly. And even though there's plenty of fun to be had doing it, that might not be enough for some.



▲ *Taunting comments from Mr Big.*



BY: SEGA
PRICE: £34.99
RELEASE DATE: LATE JAN
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 5
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: AAOW!

1 PLAYERS

PRESENTATION 94%
Brilliant! Comic Jackson cameo screens, plenty of options including a sound test (of course).

GRAPHICS 93%
Whacko Jacko struts his thang, moonwalks and even enters lifts in a cool fashion.

SOUND 93%
Amazing if you're a Jackson fan - slightly annoying if you aren't. Loads of "oohs" and "aaows" too!

PLAYABILITY 84%
Addictive, though slightly repetitive find-the-kids gameplay.

LASTABILITY 75%
Hmmm. Not really that much to keep you coming back to the Megadrive once you've finished the game.

OVERALL 81%
An essential purchase for Jackson groupies, and a decent enough game in its own right.

PROBOTECTOR




▲ An exploding bridge too far.

Intergalactic peace seems to be a very unlikely event, at least according to games writers. In Probotector, Alien robots have invaded, and it's up to one man - or two, if wanted - to stop the conquest and destroy the mother alien and her island bunker. To achieve this the commandos are armed with the latest peashooters - although power-up tokens are available at certain points during the action.

Most of the eight levels are left-to-right scrolling blasters, with the heroes jumping, somersaulting and ducking their way through the platforms that make up the battlefield. However two levels are viewed in 3D, similar to Dynamite Duke or even Operation Wolf. Here the heroes dodge a hail of bullets and bombs until they blast through the walls, leading on to the next challenge.

The trail of devastation finally leads to the source of the invasion, an island fortress infested with Aliens (yes, those Aliens!) and assorted nasties. Getting to this stage is far from easy, though, as there are Ice Worlds, bunkers, and bases to fight past. But who said destroying an alien race was easy?





▼ Our happy heroes go on a skiing holiday.




▲ Giant Hula hoops from hell!

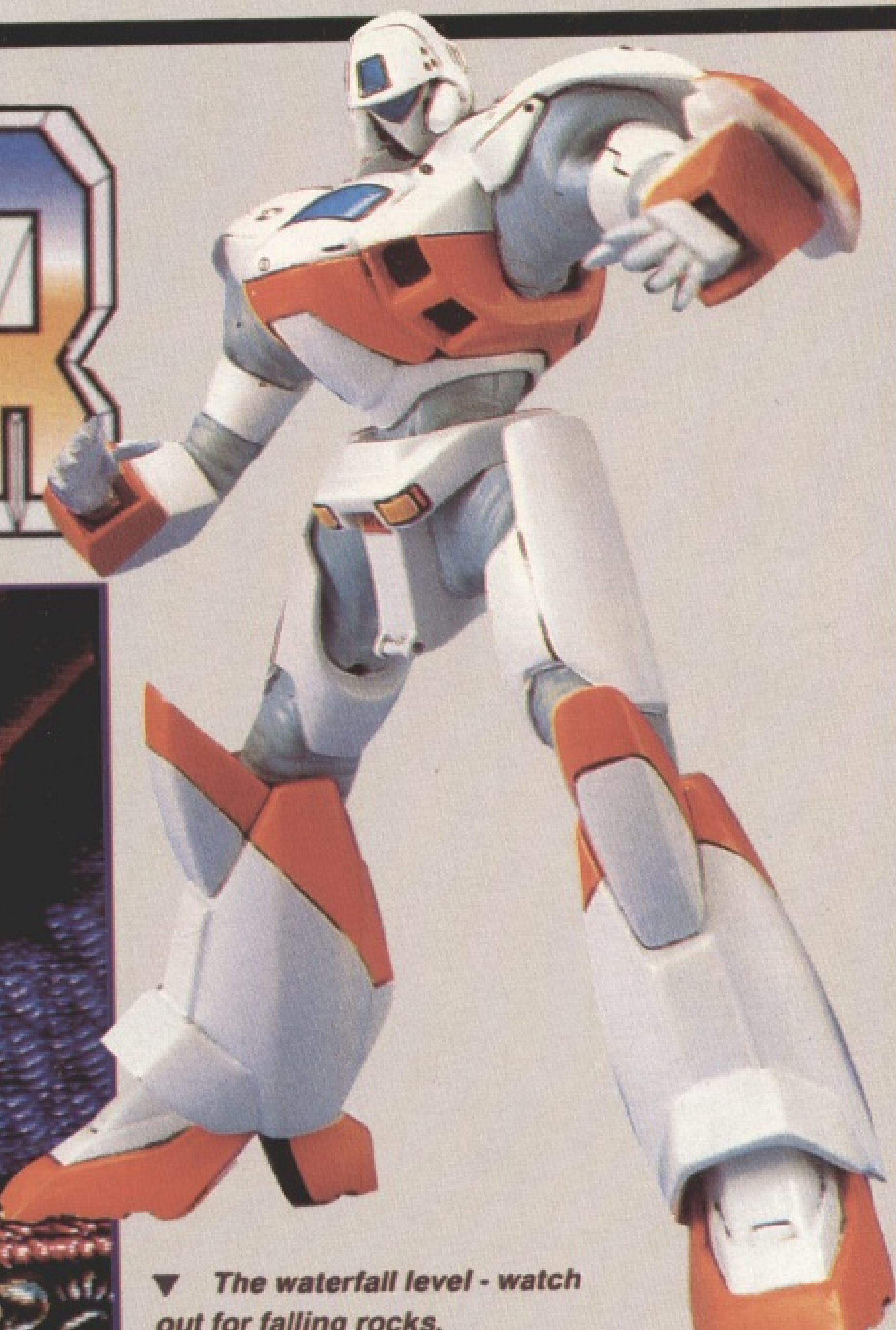
COMMENT



MATT

This is one of the Playchoice Ten games to be found in many pubs and arcades, although the name is Contra on that system - are Nintendo starting to show some political sensitivity? Anyway, Contra was a boring and repetitive game, and changing its name and the look of the sprites hardly alters that fact. The commandos are awkward to control, and have an annoying habit of crouching down facing in the wrong direction. The graphics improve throughout the game, but then again they have to; the early levels look primitive in the extreme. So considering the NES games coming out at the moment - games that have outstanding graphics, sound and playability - this really can't be recommended.



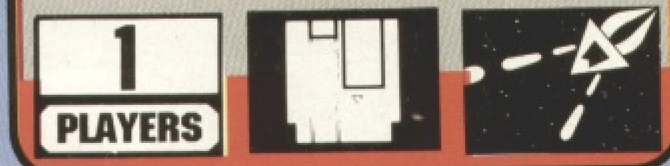


▼ *The waterfall level - watch out for falling rocks.*



PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: FEB
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 3
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: POOR



PRESENTATION 62%

Don't expect a flashy intro, because you'd be disappointed.

GRAPHICS 72%

The visuals improve as the game progresses, but never reach great heights.

SOUND 56%

Bleepy sound effects and naff tunes don't enhance the action much.

PLAYABILITY 79%

It's fun in a mindless sort of way, and the two styles of gameplay help to give the game depth.

LASTABILITY 69%

This will amuse in small doses, but it's too repetitive and not challenging enough to keep you coming back.

OVERALL 73%

Not bad, but not particularly brilliant either. Look at other Nintendo titles before buying this.



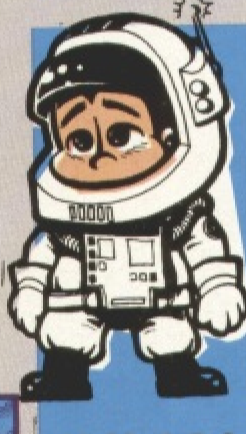
CONTRA DEAL

Originally, this game appeared in US arcades as a stand-alone arcade machine called Contra, and starred two muscle-bound heroes on a quest to destroy an evil alien-controlled government in South America. When it was released in the UK, the name was changed to Gryzor, but otherwise the game remained the same. Now it's been converted to the Nintendo, and the sprites have been changed into robots, but the game is still the same. Weird, eh?





COMMENT



The problem with this is that it's not particularly challenging. It takes a few goes to get used to the slightly ropey control method, and after that it's simply a case of blasting your way through the pretty weak alien defences. It's fun at first, due to the fact that you can get pretty far into the game, but once you've completed it, it all gets rather predictable. Gryzor fans might enjoy the action, but really you'd get far more out of something like Snake, Rattle 'n' Roll or Megaman 2.

JULIAN

GAIN GROUND

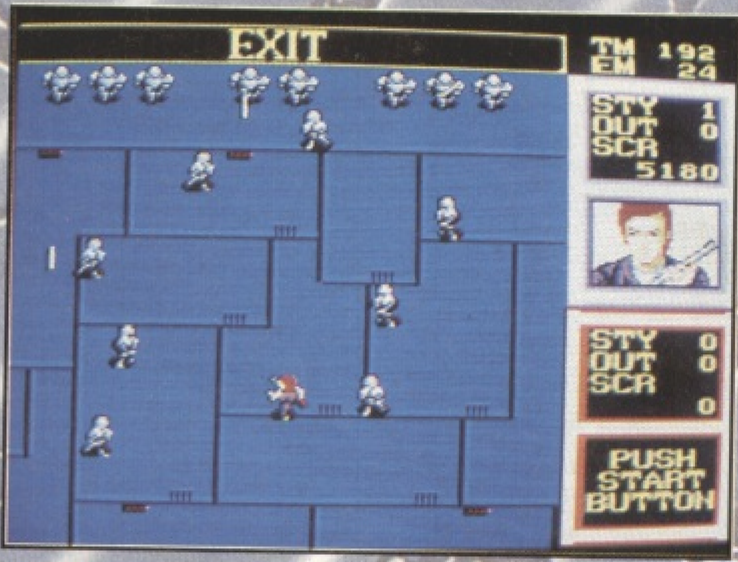
Many people consider simulation games rather dull. But when the simulation involves battling real androids in a controlled environment, things start to look a little more interesting.

However this game of the far future has gone terribly wrong; the androids have turned into killers, thanks to a malfunction in the main computer. A number of players are trapped in this lethal world, and their only hope of survival is to fight through the battlefields and reach and destroy the computer.

Based on the arcade game of the same title, Gain Ground pits one or two players, controlling their team of warriors, against the master computer and its minions. These take the form of weird aliens, robot soldiers, and huge metallic monsters.

Starting off with three characters, each player makes his choice and makes his way through each battlefield with the aim of reaching the exit.

Each of the characters has his or her own basic attack, together with a special weapon that usually involves a ranged attack. With fifty combat screens, often crowded with enemies, it's no simple task to gain ground.



▲ With this many enemies, it's hard not to get the blues.

▼ Smash the walls to get past the baddies.



▼ Try to attack this robot from a distance (like Cliff says).



This guy guarding the entrance is tougher than the bouncers at Stringfellows! ▼

COMMENT



MATT

Gain Ground was an obscure coin-op in the first place, and the Master System version hardly grabs the imagination either. A good idea has been lost in dreary, aimless play that constantly fails to grab the imagination; I thought the game would improve as it became more difficult - but no luck there! The graphics are block-like and lack any real animation, and in my humble opinion the sound has little to add to the overall blandness of this game. There are some good features in this effort, though; some of the later screens provide a fair amount of challenge, and it takes some time to work out the approach needed to battle through the robots. It's a shame that the play soon becomes repetitive. Still, it's a different game that just misses out in the excitement stakes.



▲ Tanks a lot, matey!

IDENTITY CRISIS

Although only three characters are selectable at first, the troops at a player's disposal grow in number as levels are completed. Here's a selection:

CAVEMAN: Can throw a spear over walls.

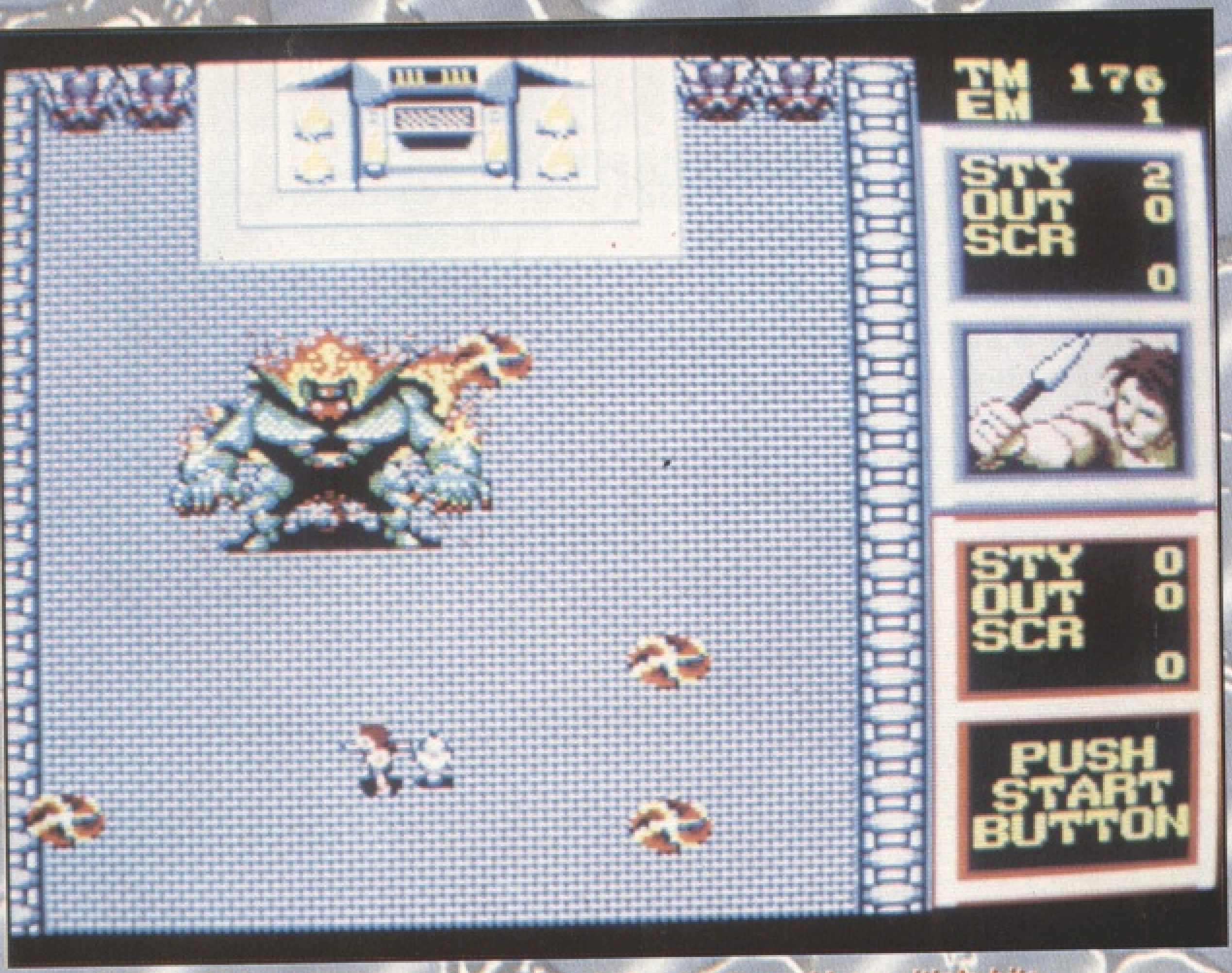
NINJA: Sets traps in neighbouring squares to kill foes.

FLAME THROWER: Surprisingly shoots flames over a wide area.

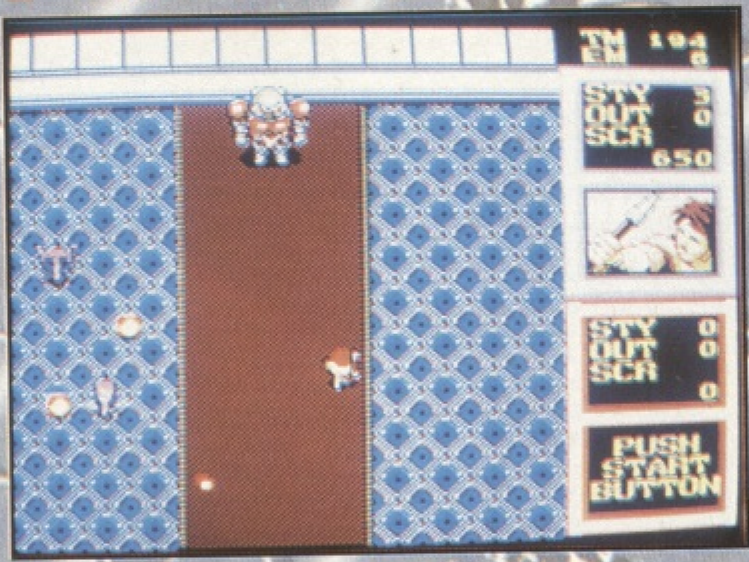
MAGICIAN: Hurls a water trap that prevents enemies from moving.







▲ This shuriken-throwing robot can only be destroyed by multiple hits.



▲ The red carpet doesn't mean you'll be treated like royalty!



▲ Grenade thrower races for the exit...



COMMENT



JULIAN

I've never seen the Gain Ground coin-op, and if it's anything like this I'm not surprised it bombed. It's rather like a single-screen Gauntlet without the thrills and spills - just guide your soldiers through enemy lines and reach the exit. It's not a particularly challenging task, since all the enemy soldiers seem to be a bit stupid and don't offer much resistance, and there's simply not enough variety to keep you interested. The graphics and sound are both uninspiring, and it doesn't take more than a few sittings before you get bored. If you're after a fun shoot 'em up involving people against an army of baddies try out Gauntlet - it's miles better than this.



BY: SEGA

PRICE: £29.99

RELEASE DATE: JAN
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY
LIVES: 3-10
CONTINUES: UNLIMITED
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: OK

1-2 PLAYERS

PRESENTATION 73%

A rather dull intro sets the flavour of the rest of the game.

GRAPHICS 69%

Although the sprites are quite detailed, the lack of animation and variety renders them dull and uninspiring.

SOUND 67%

Simple and bland spot effects maintain the lack of thrills in this game.

PLAYABILITY 72%

The play is interesting at first, but after as few sessions it all becomes rather monotonous.

LASTABILITY 56%

Fifty screens might seem a lot, but when they're all basically very similar, lasting appeal is limited.

OVERALL 62%

A good game in principal marred by the complete lack of challenge and excitement.

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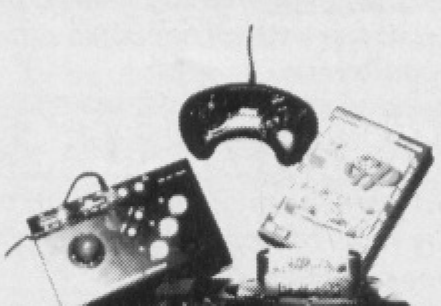
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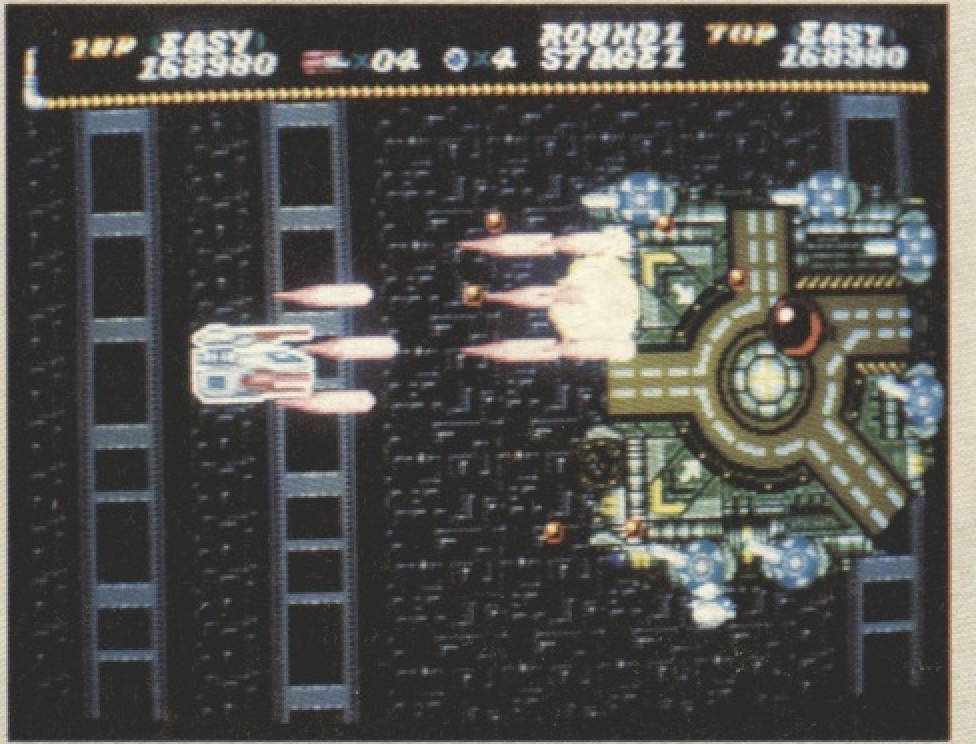
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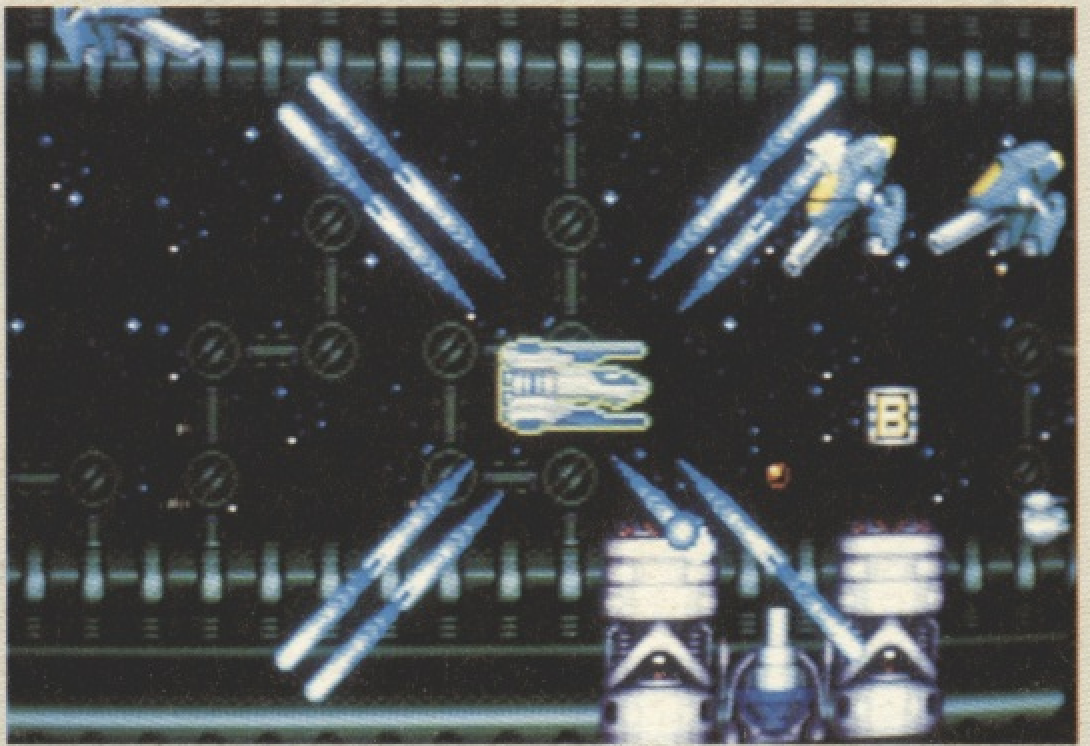
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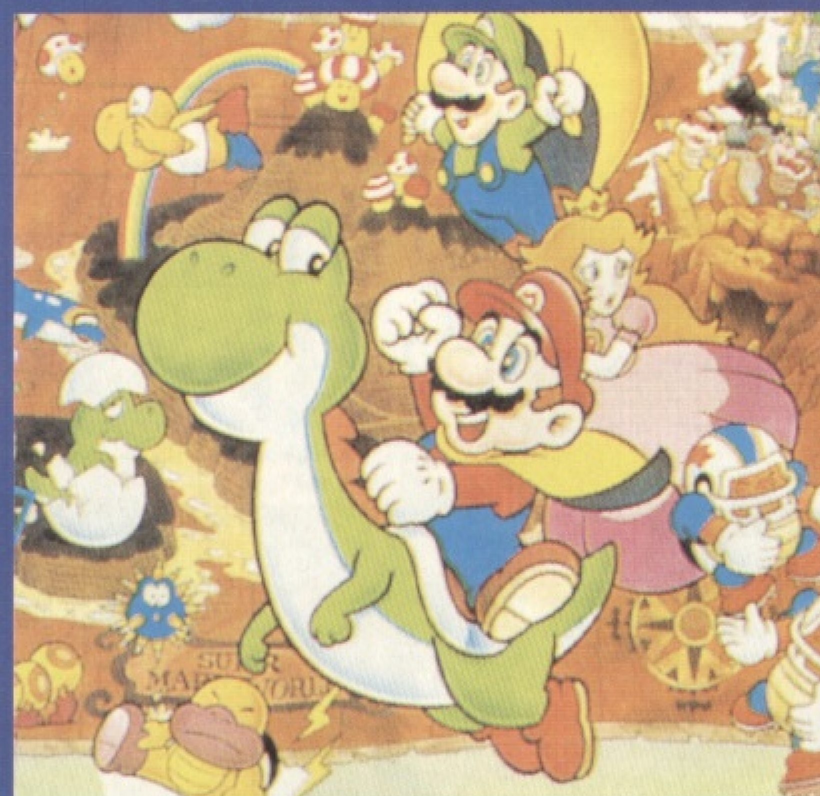
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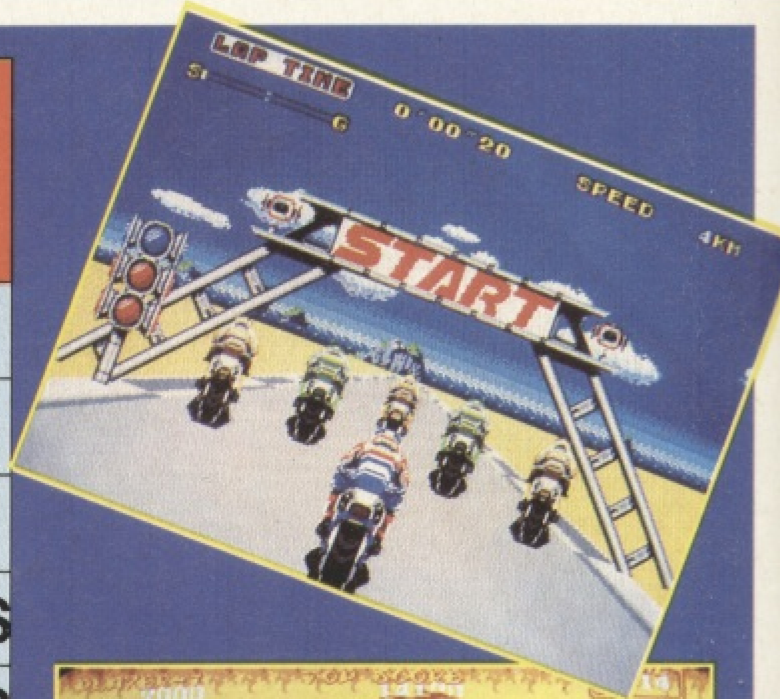

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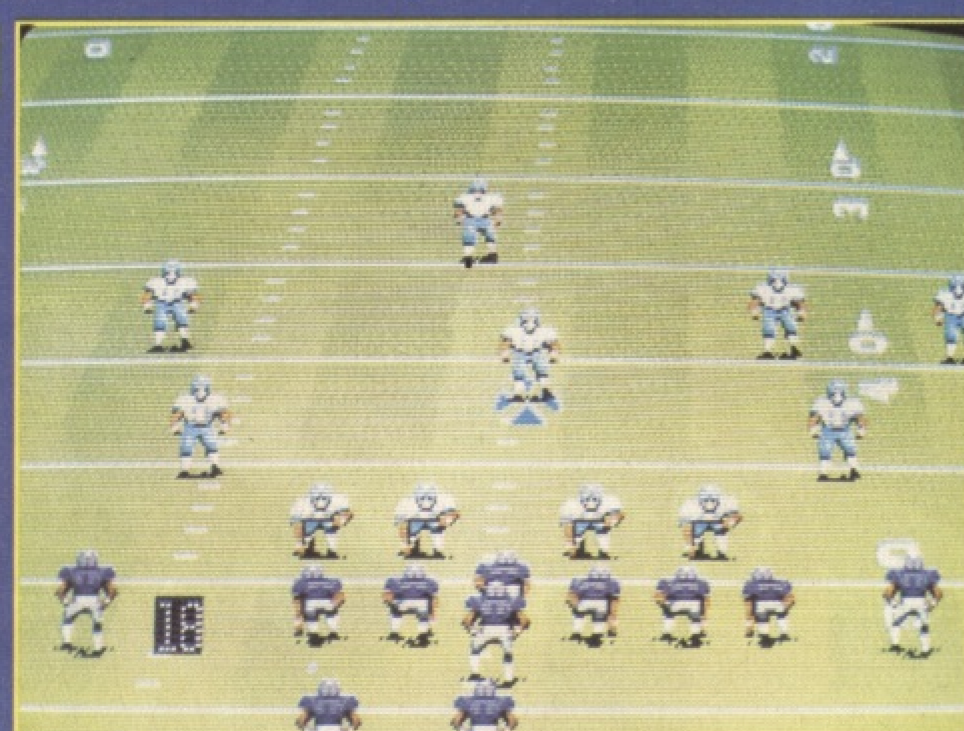
Hecky mick! You should have seen us rushing around the office trying to get the Megadrive charts in before we went to press. Sadly, though, due to a technical fault - in other words, Sega not sending the charts to us in time - we're unable to bring the Megadrive charts to you. So here's last month's for you to look at again. Next month you'll be able to find out all about what happened - we promise...

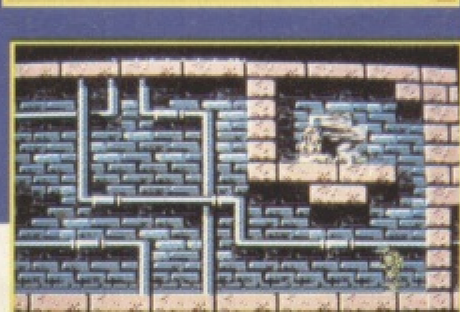


PREDICTIONS

MEGADRIVE: JOHN MADDEN'S
SEGA: SUPER MONACO GP
NINTENDO: TURTLES





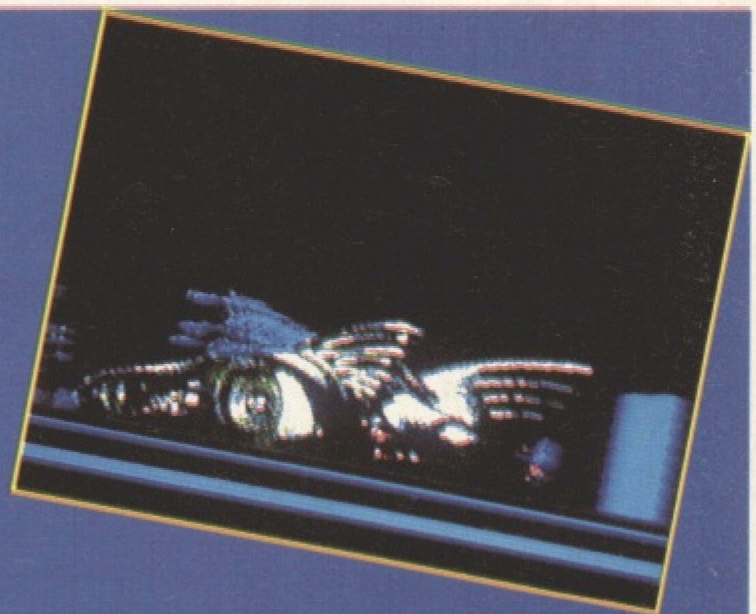


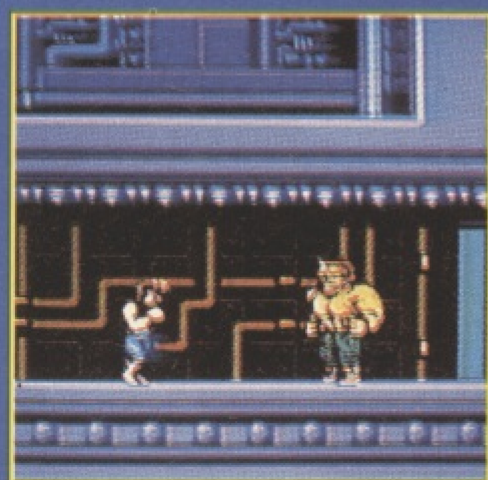
NINTENDO

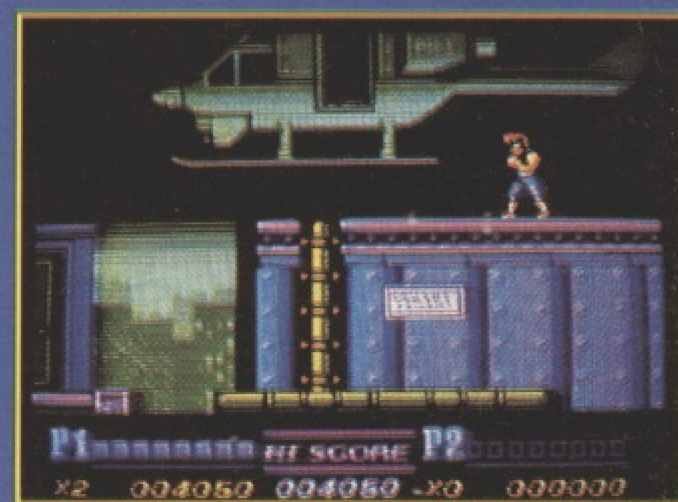
1	▶	MUTANTE TURTLES
2	▶	BATMAN
3	NE	DOUBLE DRAGON II
4	▼	SUPER MARIO II
5	▲	NE TETRIS
6	▼	ADV OF LINK
7	▼	TRACK AND FIELD II
8	▼	BUBBLE BOBBLE
9	▼	LEGEND OF ZELDA
10	NE	COBRA TRIANGLE

NINTENDO

No problems with the Nintendo charts, thank goodness! Turtles, as predicted, remains unassailable at the top spot, and the very lovely Batman keeps dogging it's footsteps. Super Mario II also holds its own, while Tetris makes a surprise entry at the number five slot. Otherwise there's little movement in the charts, with only Cobra Triangle making a deserved appearance for the first time. Don't expect a lot of movement at the top for a few months!





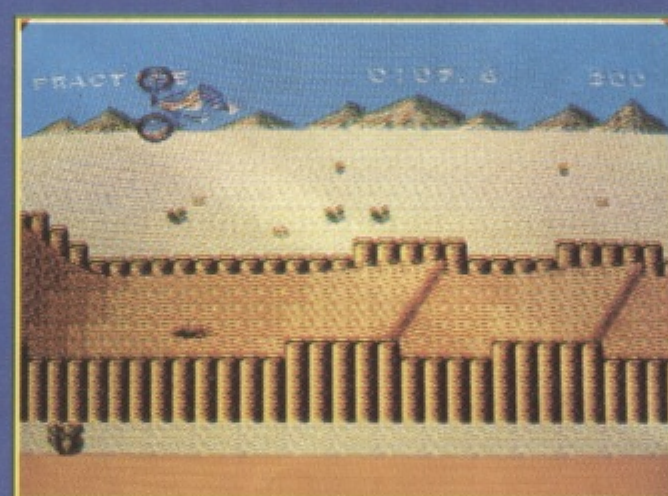


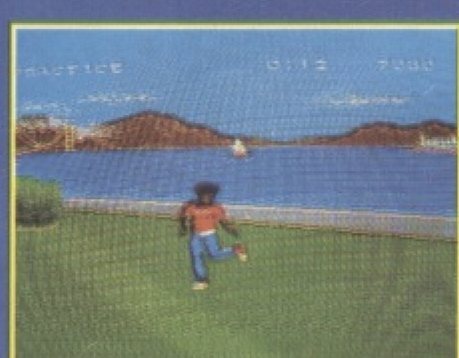
SEGA

1		GOLDEN AXE
2	◀	CHASE HQ
3	◀	OPERATION WOLF
4	▲	DOUBLE DRAGON
5	▼	BATTLE OUTRUN
6	NE	WONDERBOY III
7	NE	WORLD SOCCER
8	NE	NINJA
9	NE	CALIFORNIA GAMES
10	▼	GOLFMANIA

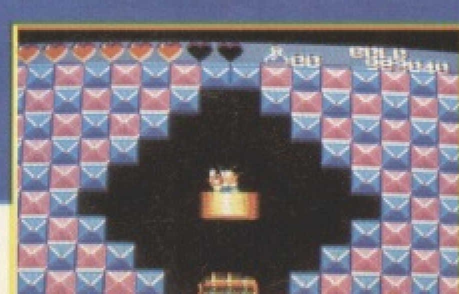
MASTER SYSTEM

"Eeek!", we hear you cry. "These darn Sega charts are exactly the same as last month's". Sorry folks, we're afraid they are. Due to that horrible technical hitch over at Sega Towers, they were unable to supply us with the Sega Christmas chart before the magazine reached its deadline. So you'll have to wait another four weeks before finding out the biggest seller this Christmas!









HA DRIV

We've been waiting for it to appear for ages, but finally Atari's massively successful filled-3D driving coin-op has been converted to the Megadrive.

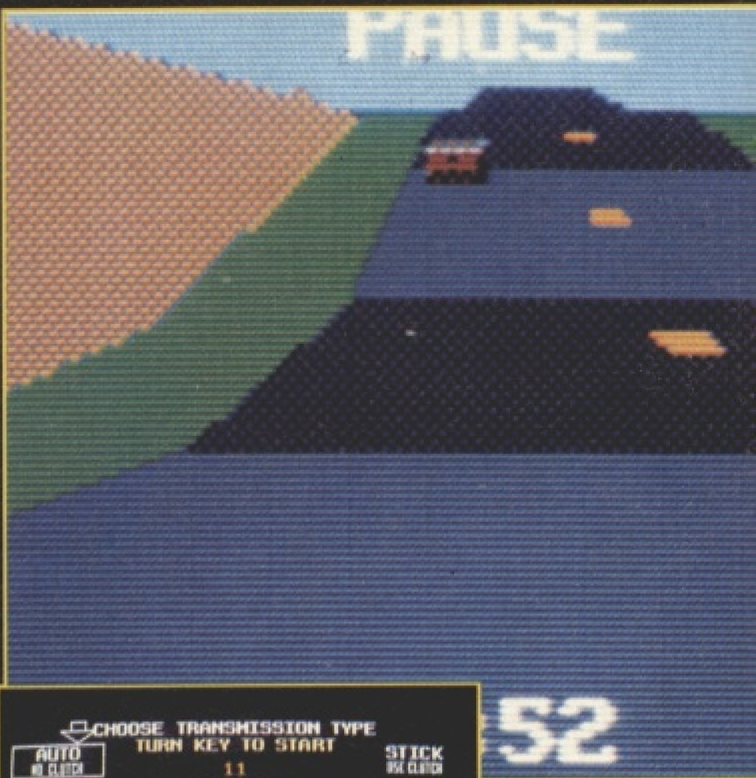
At first you choose either an automatic or manually-geared car. After that it's straight behind the wheel for some serious speeding. The idea is to drive around a track, reaching each checkpoint dotted around the course to add extra time to your ever-decreasing timer. Should the timer run out, it's game over, so the pressure is on for fast driving.

There are two routes you can take around the course - the speed track and the stunt track. The former is a fairly straightforward, but slightly longer course where you can really get your foot down. The stunt course requires a far more careful approach, with a loop-the-loop, broken bridge and some high speed banking to negotiate.

As well as concentrating on staying on the road, there are other road users to worry about. Cars and lorries travel around the track in both directions, so take care not to stray over the other side of the road!

If you hit any obstacle, a third-person perspective replay of your crash is shown, and you're put back on the road a little further back from the point of impact, resulting in precious time being lost.







▲ The full horror of the course ahead of you...

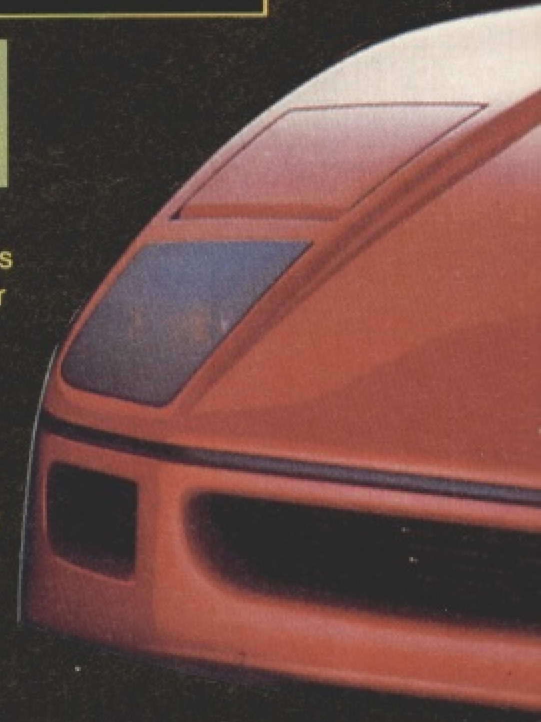


▲ Running over the 2D



GREY IMPORT WARNING

At present this is only available from Megadrive software importers and is NOT officially available from Sega in this country. This means that the game will work fine on Megadrives that have been imported from Japan, but will not work on official UK Megadrives unless you have a games adaptor (available from mail order import companies) or your machine has been modified (which we do not recommend you do as this invalidates your warranty).



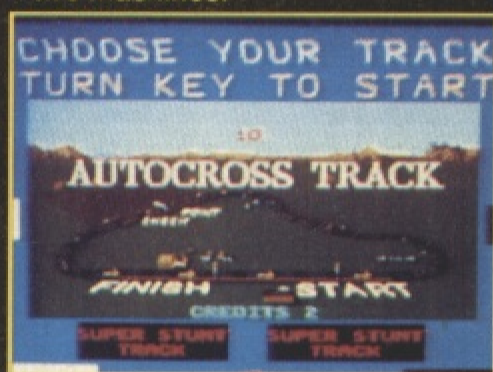


THE COIN-OP

Atari's revolutionary 3D coin-op appeared in the arcades during spring 1989, and quickly became one of the most popular arcade machines of all time. Its freedom of movement and "real world" environment, coupled with its amazing stunt and speed tracks and "real" car controls and handling resulted in very original and highly playable coin-gobbler. If you haven't played it yet - check out an arcade and make sure you do!!!

HARD DRIVIN' GETS HARDER

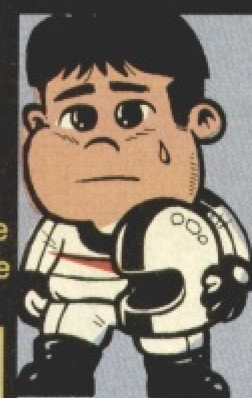
Hitting the arcades this month is Race Drivin', the sequel to Hard Drivin'. Using the same graphics system, but featuring two new tracks and four different cars, it's a very challenging and addictive race game. The new stunt track features a mountain pass, a broken loop-the-loop, bumpy speed banking, a high roller coaster hill, a tunnel and a corkscrew with three loops! The off-road track is quite straightforward, but the slippery course makes it ideal to practice rallying skills. There's even a two-player link-up option inside the coin-op should your arcade feature two machines.





▲ *Thrills 'n' spills as your motor begins to skid*

COMMENT



MATT

Hard Drivin' was easily one of the most innovative coin-ops of the late eighties: its filled-vector graphics and tactile feedback, as well as its original stunt tracks, caused a sensation in the arcades. However the Megadrive version cannot possibly offer that sort of excitement - and so the player is left with the bare bones of the game, so to speak. It's my sad duty to report that this conversion really doesn't cut the mustard. The car handles well and the update is fast, but ultimately the game lacks longevity. It's easy to finish the courses, and then what do you do? Finish them again? Megadrive games are expensive, so if you want to play Hard Drivin', go to the arcades and spend a few ten pees - you'll get better value for money.



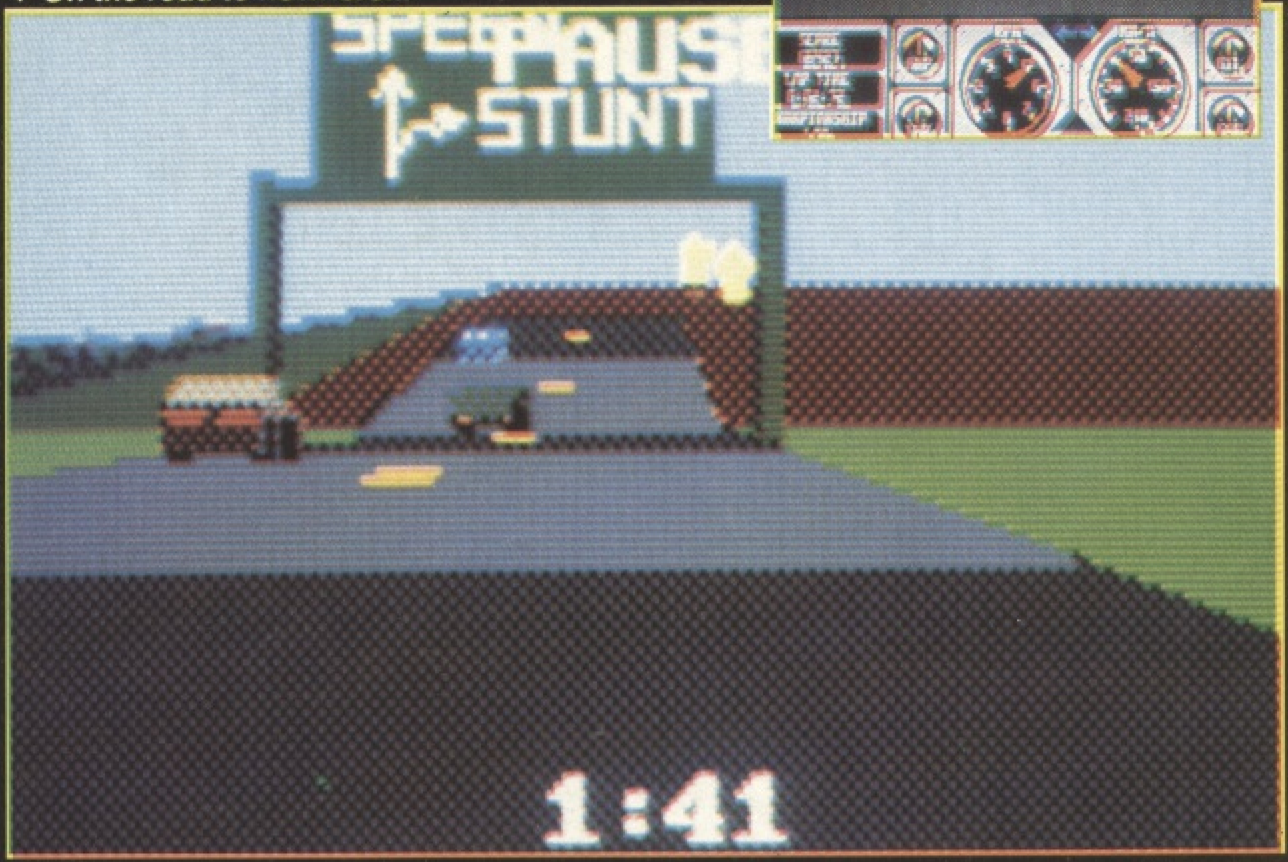
REVIEW



▲ *Passing the motorised cardboard box in Hard Drivin'.*

▼ *On the road to nowhere...*

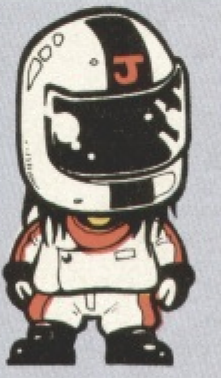




THE PHANTOM PHOTON

Should you race around the track in record time, you're challenged to a head-to-head race by the Phantom Photon. Both you and the Photon are positioned on the starting line, and you've simply got to race around the stunt track and cross the finish line before he does. A challenge indeed!

COMMENT



JULIAN

Hard Drivin' worked well as a coin-op - the positive feedback steering wheel, realistic clutch controls and enclosed cabinet made for an enjoyable driving experience. However, on the Megadrive much of the coin-op's tactile appeal has been stripped away, exposing what is really a rather basic racing game. The 3D graphics are smooth, fast and impressive, and the game is certainly enjoyable for a while. But once you've mastered the tracks and beaten the Phantom Photon (which doesn't take a vast amount of practice) it all gets rather dull and pointless. Players who loved the coin-op will doubtless enjoy the action, but it won't take long before the novelty wears off.

LEARN TO DRIVE

Originally, Hard Drivin was developed as a machine to help learner drivers get used to controlling a car before they actually went out on the road. However, the designers soon realised that it would be much more fun (and make far more money) if they turned their creation into an arcade machine, so they beefed up the car to make it perform like a top sports car, and added all sorts of wild' 'n' wacky features to the track, such as stunt jumps and high speed banking! The result was one of the most enjoyable race games seen in the arcades.



BY: TENGEN

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: VERY EASY
LIVES: N/A
CONTINUES: N/A
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: OK

1 PLAYERS

PRESENTATION 83%
An impressive options screen and good in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 84%
Fast and effective 3D, although some of the colours are rather drab.

SOUND 47%
Weak engine and skidding noises and an equally feeble title screen tune which should have been a lot better.

PLAYABILITY 81%
Great controls and straightforward gameplay make this very easy to get into - almost too easy.

LASTABILITY 38%
Although it's fun at first, once you've beaten the Photon and mastered the tracks the lack of variety results in boredom.

OVERALL 51%
The lack of decent sound, variety and long-term challenge ruin an otherwise impressive conversion. For ardent coin-op fans only.

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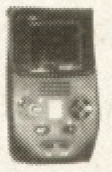


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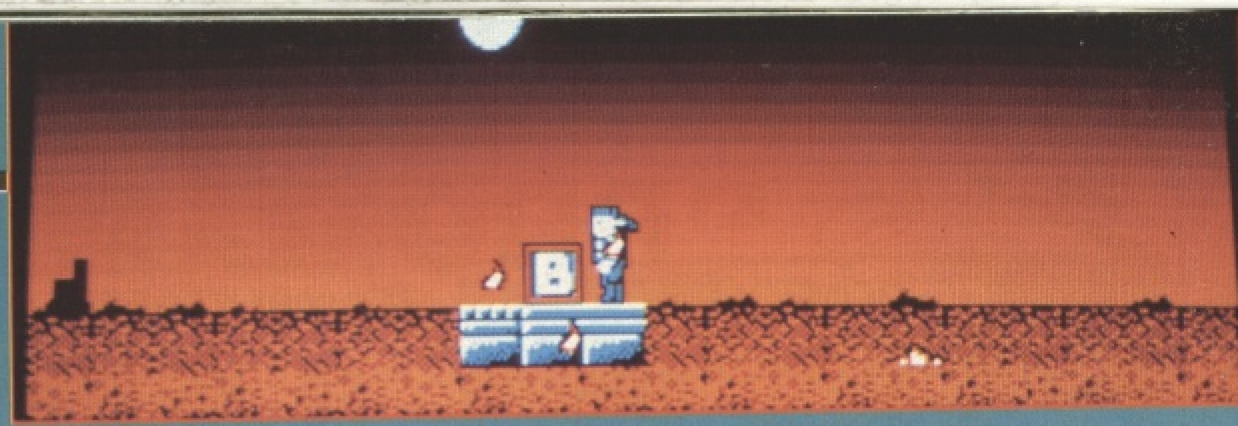
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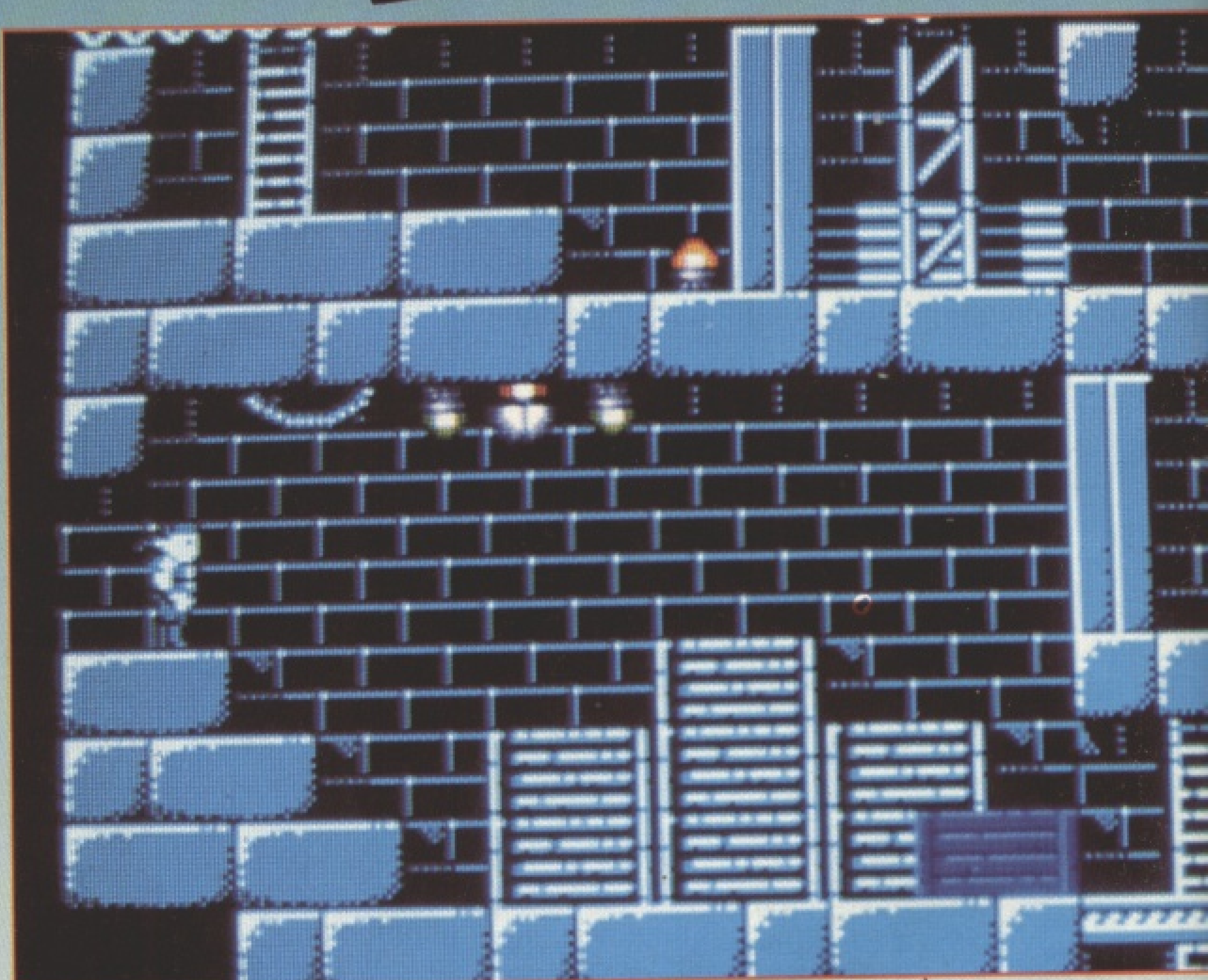


SWITCHBLADE

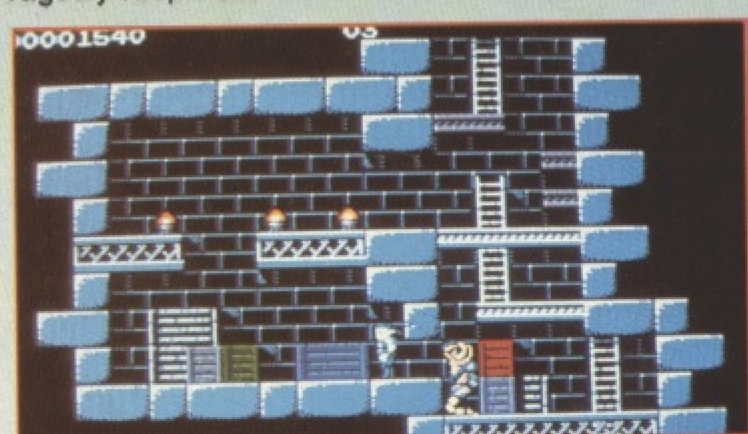
Havok, the evil warlord, has stolen the Fireblade and broken it into four pieces. This has caused the world of Thraxx, once a peaceful nirvana, to become a devastated wasteland. Now Hiro must enter Havok's Undercity and, as the last Bladeknight, assemble the pieces of the Fireblade and defeat Havvy (as he's known to his friends).

Hiro starts the game above ground, and must find an entrance to the Undercity. Once there, the numerous fiendish traps and puzzles must be solved in order to progress to the next screen. Hiro jumps, kicks and punches his way through the caverns, defeating the baddies either with violence or cunning - most creatures can be jumped over, or lured into falling down pits.

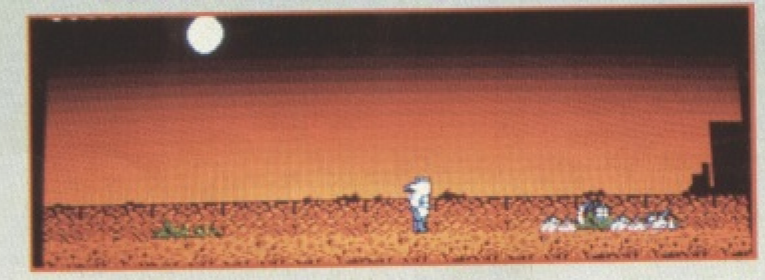
Goodies are scattered around the screens, and take different forms. Potion bottles can be kicked to reveal extra health, and shattering certain wall-blocks uncovers new (temporary) weapons, such as shuriken, bullets, or fireballs, which are especially useful for defeating the major monsters that guard the parts of the Fireblade. Destroying these blocks also reveals secret chambers - so be sure to kick anything vaguely suspicious!

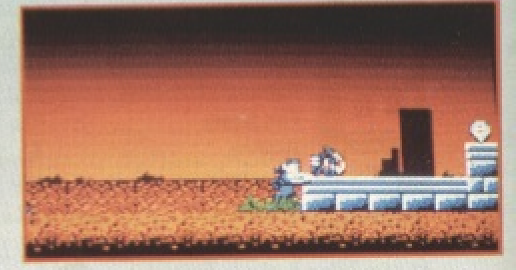


▲ *As Hiro explores the Underworld, more and more of the surrounding area is revealed.*



▲ *Destroy the top block and then use low kicks to kill the nasty below.*





PACKING A PUNCH

Power-up icons can be difficult to locate, but are a must-have when it comes to offing the bosses. Here's a look at the options:



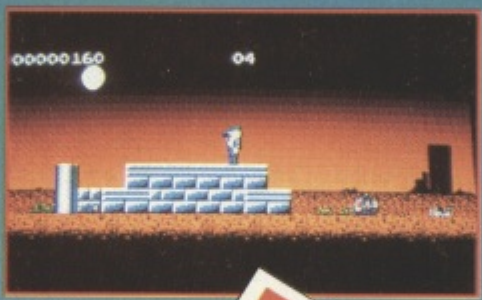
BULLETS: Rapid fire, but cause relatively low damage.

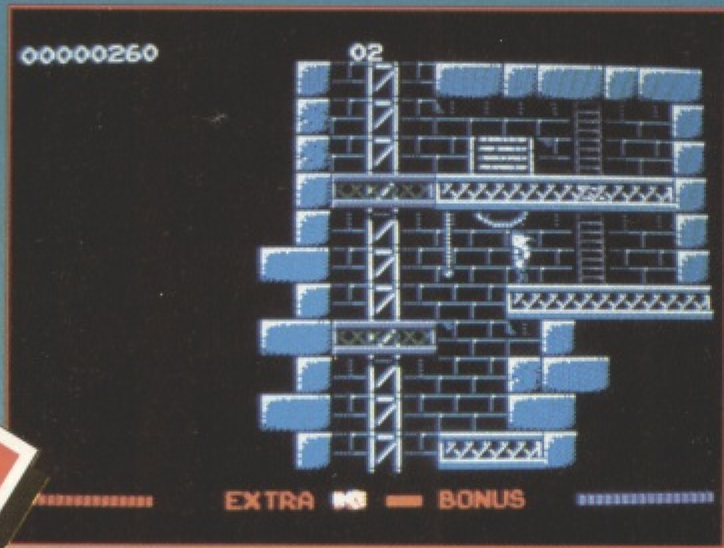


SHURIKEN: Move slowly through the air, but seriously injure foes.



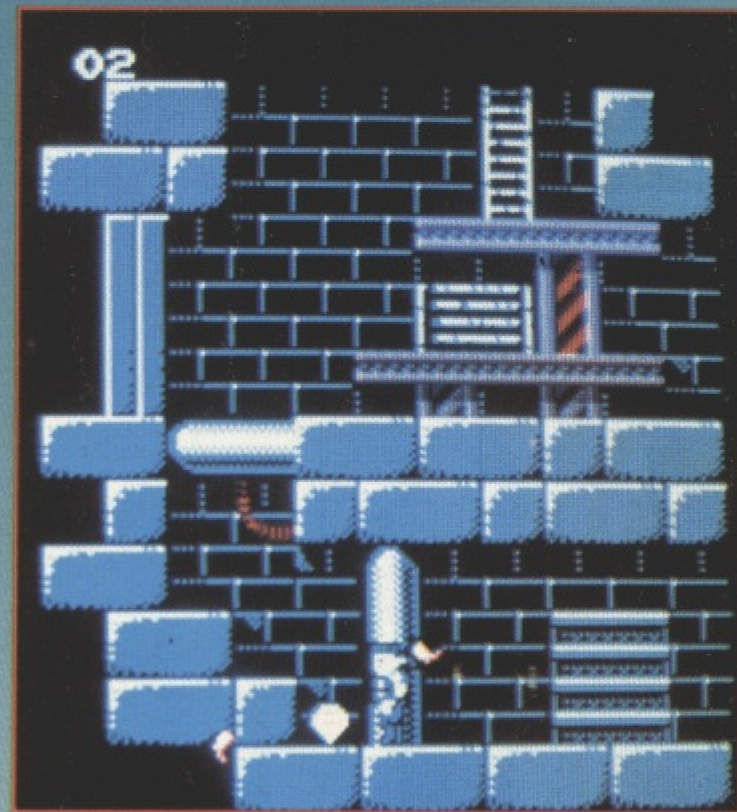
SUPER PUNCH: A close-range weapon that knocks the socks off the enemy.

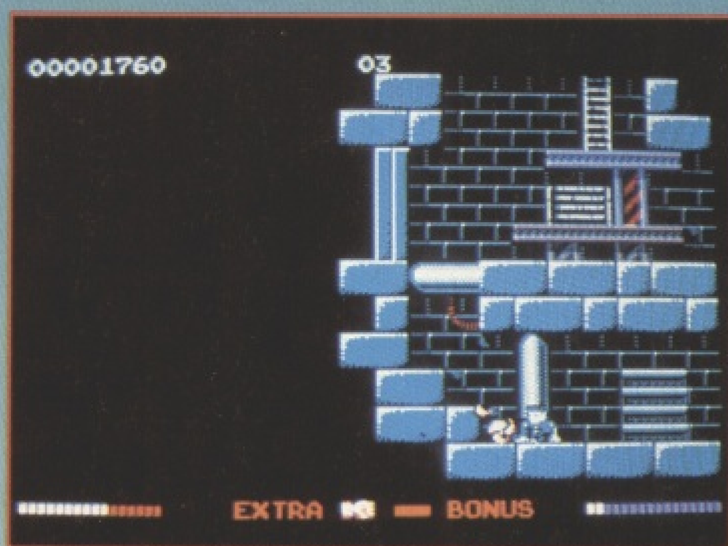




There's a false block just below - if Hiro can get to it.

Gems provide extra points when collected.

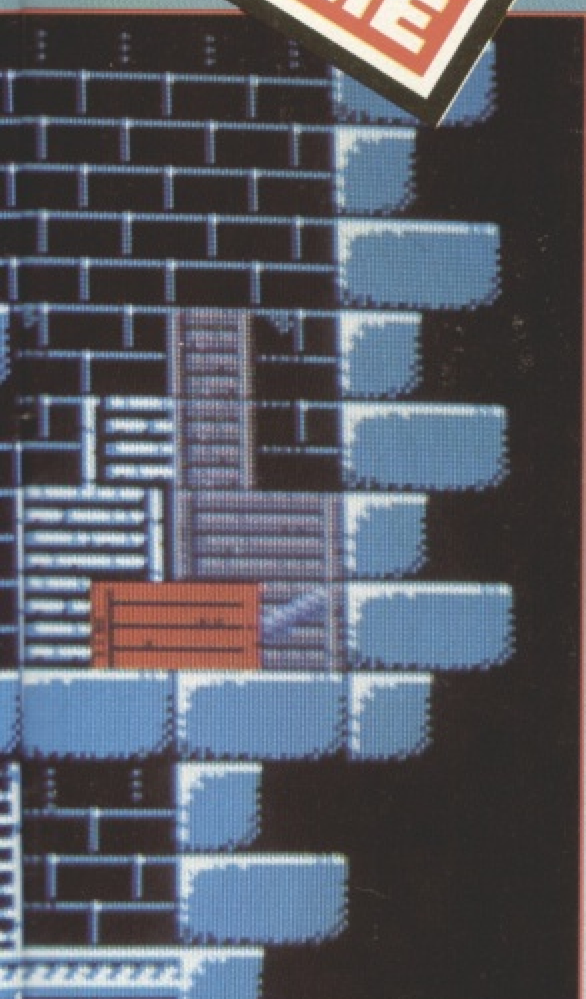


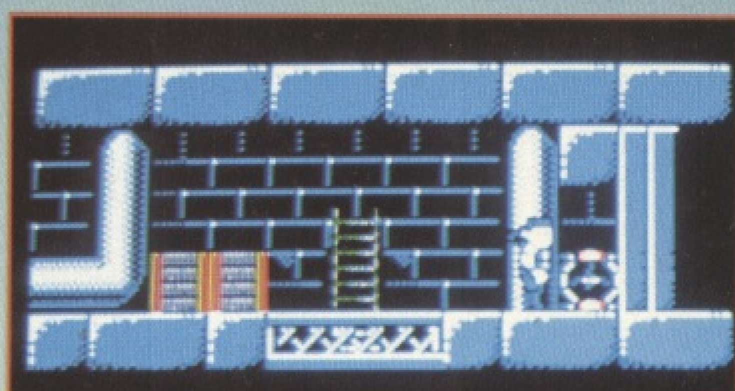


Another token to be collected!

The man himself in all his glory!







A Blade icon awaits collection next to Hiro.

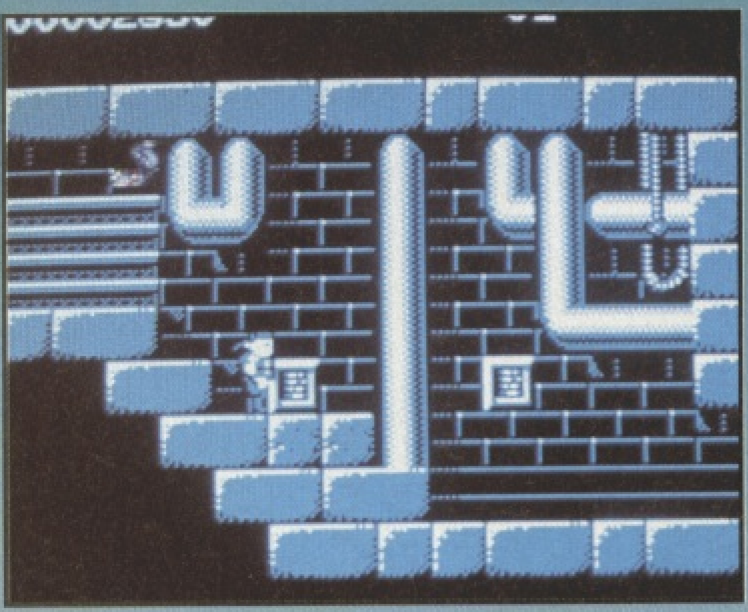


COMMENT



MATT

It's about time a Rick Dangerous-type game was successfully converted to the GX4000, and this fits the bill perfectly. This style of game rewards intelligence as much as reflexes, with teasingly difficult puzzles that give the player a real sense of achievement when he or she finally works out how to get past them. The animation is confident and expressive, and the music is absolutely wonderful. My only gripe is with the lack of colour; this obviously affects the visual side of the game, but the strength of the playability more than compensates for this. So don't be put off by the screenshots - this is an excellent game for GX4000 owners. Let's see Switchblade on other formats, Gremlin!



DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS

The enemies come in many shapes and sizes in Switchblade. Dragonmen are fairly easy to dispose of - especially with a mega-kick - but have a nasty habit of pushing Hiro off the screen. As some creatures reappear every time the hero re-enters a screen, this can seriously damage Hiro's health! Scorpions are fearsome opponents, and are virtually impossible to kill; the best bet is to leap over them. Of course, the cavern must be high enough for this!



▲ *Hiro pauses to plan his next move.*

COMMENT

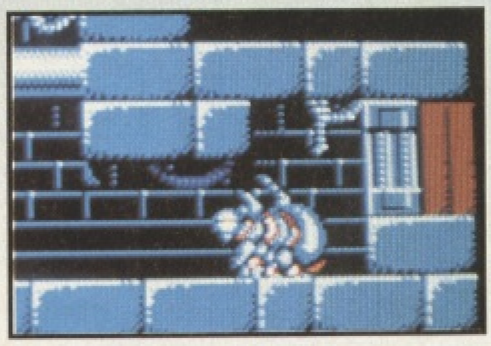


JULIAN

At last! A decent platform game on the GX4000! Switchblade might not look like the greatest game in the world due to the rather drab backgrounds, but it's the playability that counts, and this has it in abundance. The landscape is huge, and there are loads of hidden screens and bonuses waiting to be discovered - just like a platform game should have! It's a pretty tough game, and you certainly have to battle every inch of the way! It helps if you make a map (if you do, send it in to the tips section!), as there are a variety of different routes around the landscape, and some are more hazard-packed than others. If you're a GX4000 owner who's looking for something decent to play, splash your cash on this smash!

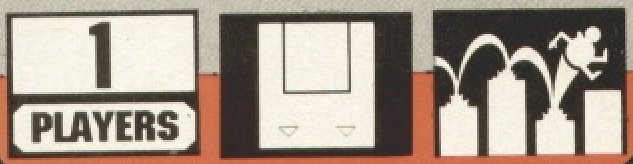


▲ *Kick the pole to gain a bonus*





BY: GREMLIN
PRICE: £24.99
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: 5
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: GREAT



PRESENTATION 82%

A cartoon-style introduction sets the scene in an atmospheric fashion.

GRAPHICS 84%

Brilliantly detailed with outstanding animation; it's only the lack of colour that lets the game down.

SOUND 89%

Despite the lack of spot effects, the groovy tune is catchy and not the weedy sound usually heard.

PLAYABILITY 94%

Immensely playable, with varied challenges and subtle changes in background. Addictive in the best possible way.

LASTABILITY 92%

With 150 screens and fearsome foes, Switchblade will keep even the most jaded player intrigued for a long time!

OVERALL 91%

Wall-smashing, baddie-biffing, tunnel-tramping fun all the way! Highly recommended.

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Pinbot is the first ever officially licensed pinball conversion, and is a superb console recreation of the classic Williams table.

The screen is divided - the static bottom panel shows the flippers and the larger scrolling top screen shows the location of the ball (see the screen shots). This is not as confusing as it sounds, as the ball is always in its position relative to the flippers.

The plunger is released via the A button, while the control pad and B button represent the left and right flippers respectively.

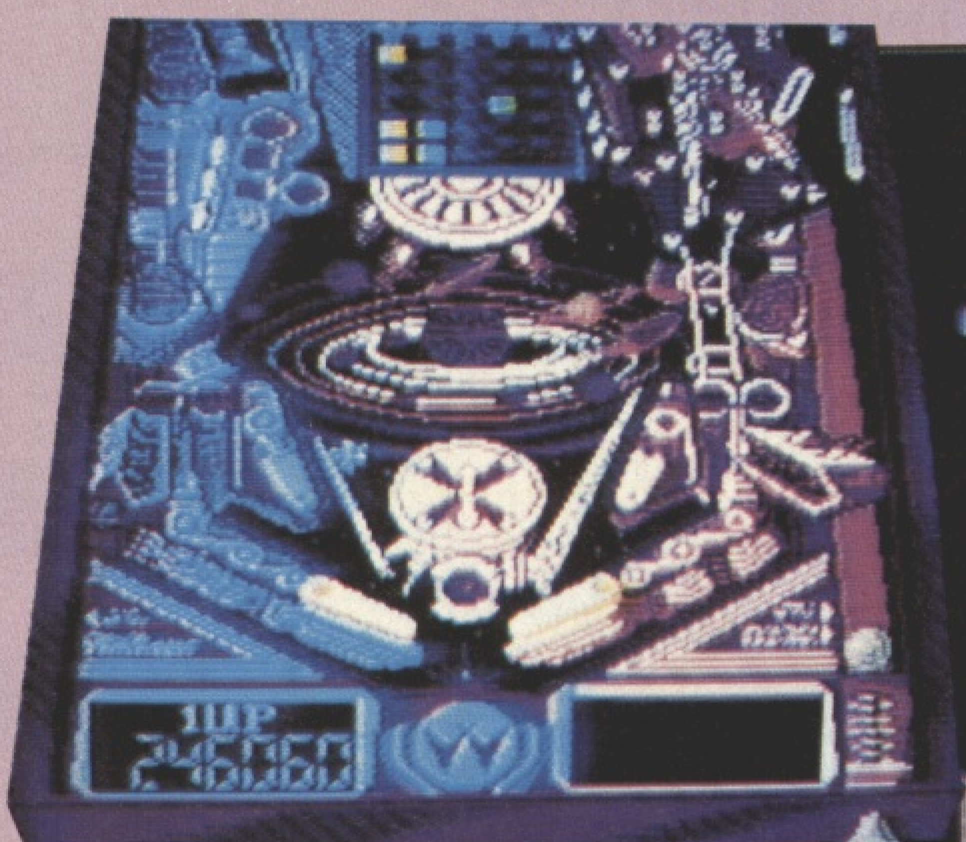
Collecting bonus points is simply a question of spanging the ball around the table using the flippers, aiming it at certain areas of the table where score bonuses can be racked up. At later levels, ghosts appear and eat the ball. So flick the plunger and hit those balls!

The ball's ready to roll - are you? ▶





PIN•BOT



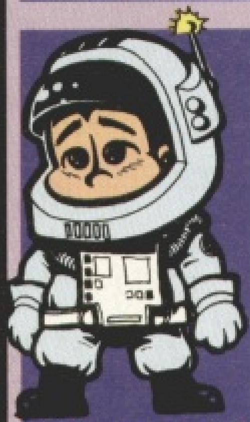


PINBALL WIZARD

Pinball is one of the most enduring of amusement arcade attractions. It's roots go back to the 30's in the form of bagatelle-style games, but Humpty Dumpty, which appeared in 1947, was the first "true" pinball table which used flippers and bumpers. Since then the basic pinball concept has remained unchanged, although electronic scoring, multi-balls, multi-playfields and sampled sound have helped keep the machines abreast of modern technology.



COMMENT



JULIAN

I'm very impressed! I played Pinbot a lot in the arcades in its pin table form, and believe me, when I say that Rare have managed to convert it perfectly to the Nintendo I really mean it! It looks and plays exactly like the real thing! The ball movement is superb, and the flippers work just like the real thing. The way the screen scrolls is an excellent idea, following the ball around and joining up with the bottom of the table panel when it's near the flippers. What I particularly like about the table is that you can have multi-balls, and there are plenty of great bonuses to rack up (and some of them pretty tricky to get!). With great speech and graphics, Pinbot is an incredibly addictive game which sure plays a mean pinball!

THE MEAN PINBALL

The futuristic scenario of Pinbot is set against a journey through the solar system. As the points mount up, the player travels past the planets on the way to the sun. Each time a level is cleared, it's possible to pick up bonus points as well as extra balls - very useful when things start to get tough!

The game attempts to look the same as the real pintable in every respect.



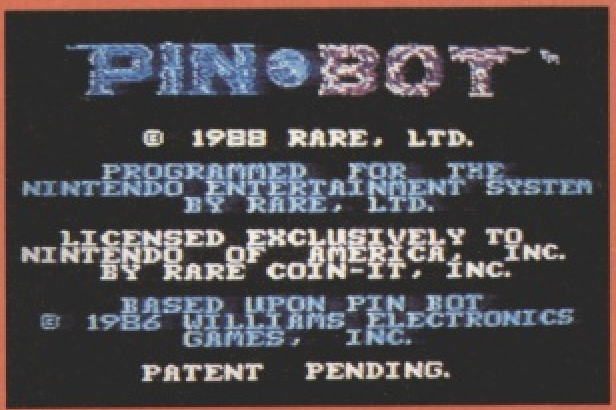


COMMENT



MATT

A pinball game may seem a redundant idea, and I was doubtful at first that this Rare conversion of the famous table would work. After playing it for a short while, however, I found this to be a cracking game - the ball movement is realistic (always the hardest thing to get right), the bonuses tricky but rewarding, and the overall effect makes this the closest thing to a pinball table possible on a console. The graphics may seem somewhat bland, but that's only because the emphasis has been placed on the more important aspects of the game. The flippers respond perfectly and the array of extra features make this game something special. For a change from the standard NES fare, check this out.



BY: RARE

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: JAN
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
BALLS: 3
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 1
FLIPPERS: SPANGY

1-4 PLAYERS

PRESENTATION 82%

A great opening screen with booming music. The score screens have a nice "spacey" effect.

GRAPHICS 85%

Although the screens may look dreary, the graphics suit the game and give a genuine pinball feel.

SOUND 89%

With an outer-space theme and robotic speech complementing the pinball sounds, this is an aural treat!

PLAYABILITY 94%

Superb ball movement, bonuses everywhere, and extra features on later levels make this play like a dream.

LASTABILITY 90%

It's no easy task to get through all the planets on the way to the sun, but it's certainly fun trying!

OVERALL 90%

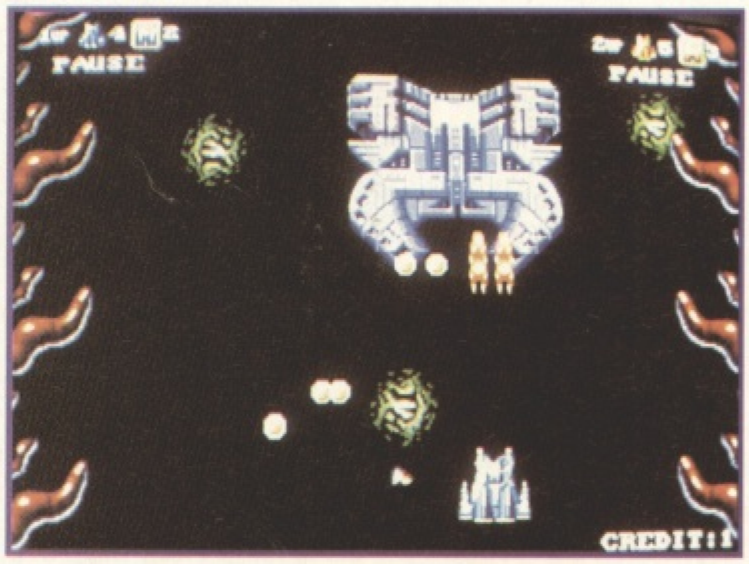
To put it simply, Pinbot is the finest pinball game on any system! A must for fans of the silverball.



Earth has been at war with the evil Barrax Empire for hundreds of years. Millions are dead, and not many people are very happy about it. Two such people are Commanders Berry D Mayers and Lori Bergen. After a successful battle mission, they have been kidnapped by the Barrax Empire on the return journey to Terrainia - and it just so happens that they're being held hostage on the flag ship of the Barrax Empire's battle fleet.

Enter the player (and his friend, if he's got one). They've risen to the challenge of busting out Bergen and Mayers and travel along the vertically scrolling worlds of the Barrax Empire, destroying the enemy battle fleet in their search for the hostages.

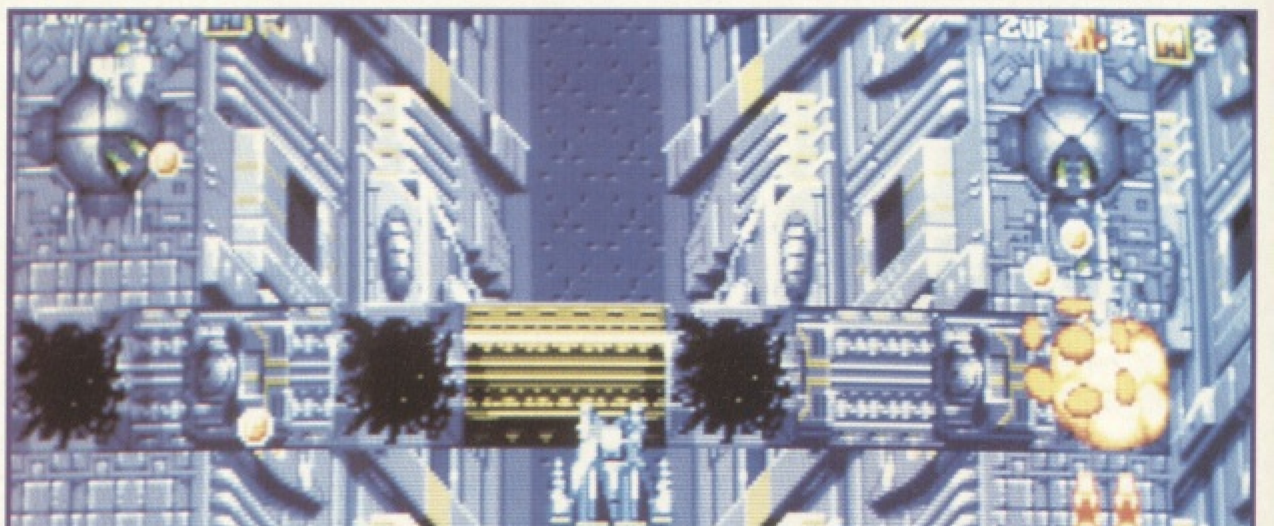
There's a huge variety of enemy craft in the fleet, and arcade shoot 'em skills are tested to the max if you choose to take on the enormous fleets of fighters and even more enormous mid-level and end-of-level guardians!

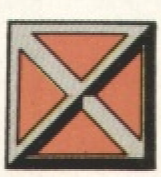


BATTLE SQUADRON WEAPONRY

Various weapons power-ups have been strategically placed along the path to the hostages. Simply blasting the carrier ship unleashes a coloured pod. The colour changes at regular intervals. Effectively, you choose your weapon by picking up the pod when it's at the colour you want.

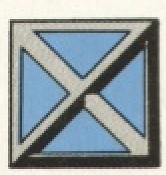
Each fighter also comes with a supply of smart weaponry. When fired, a huge amount of fiery bombs travel around the screen, destroying everything in its path! Additional ammo for this weapon is occasionally supplied.





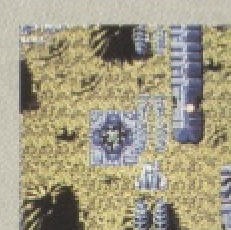
RED: Equips the ship with a spray weapon. Deadly red photons issue out in a cone form in front of the ship. Powers-up into a more rapidly firing weapon encompassing a larger area.





BLUE: Forward and rear laser bolts are attached to your craft if you collect a blue-coloured pod.

Repeated power-ups produce more bolts which fire quicker.



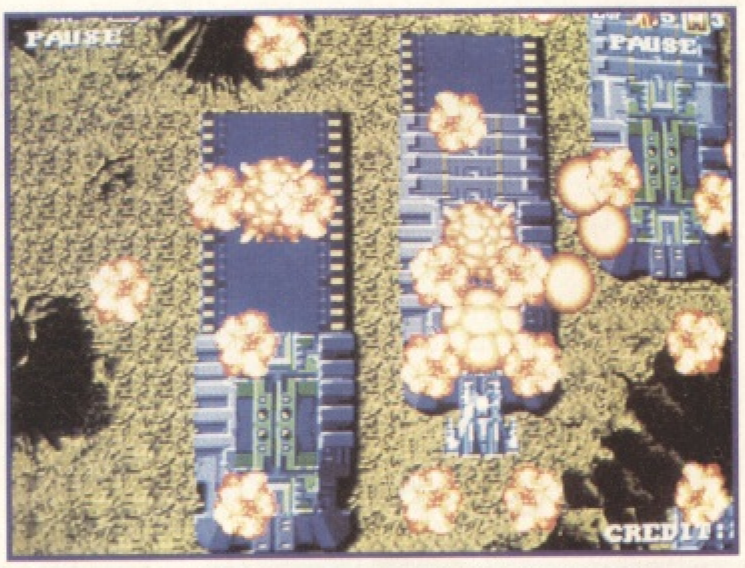


COMMENT



MATT

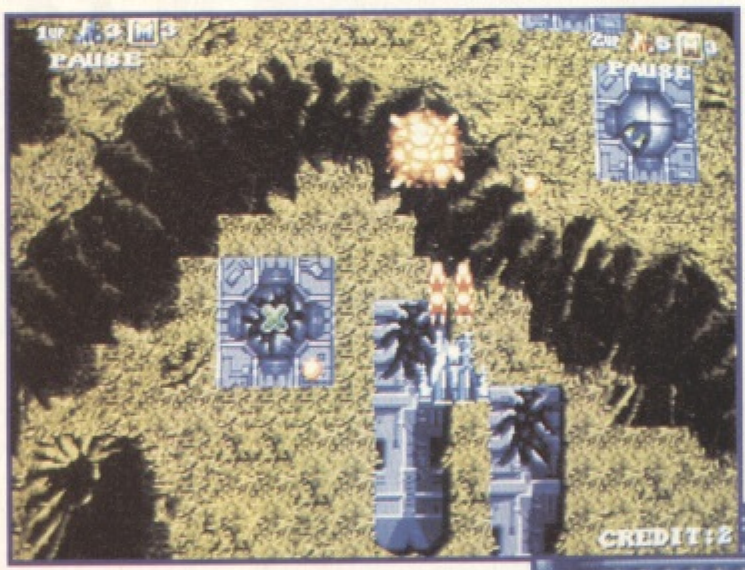
Although Battle Squadron has the option for simultaneously two-player blasting and a full screen to its credit, there's a couple of major let-downs that stop it from being a terrific game. First of all, the extra weaponry is dull and uninteresting compared to the likes of Truxton. Your joypad is also likely to wear out because a rapid fire option hasn't been included. The sound is a bit disappointing. Apparently, Rob Hubbard was contractually bound to copy the Amiga version's tunes and they're not really suited to the game at all - this strikes me as a real waste of the Hubbard's talent. Battle Squadron is still a very addictive game with excellent graphics, I just think that the potential of the game has been fully realised. Try out Hellfire for the ultimate Megadrive blast.



▲ *Mega-annihilation accompanies the smart weapon.*



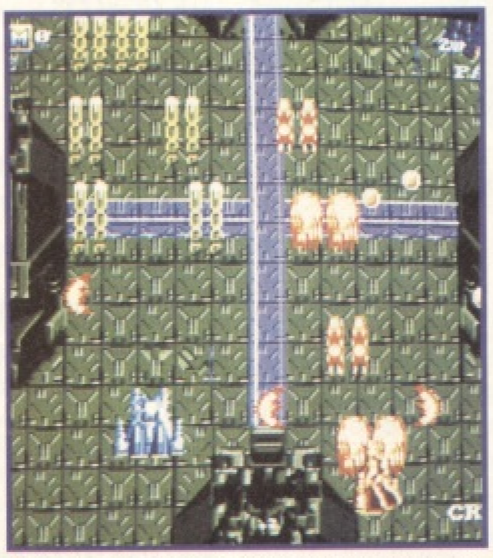
▲ *Two player action as the Barrax Empire eats destruction.*



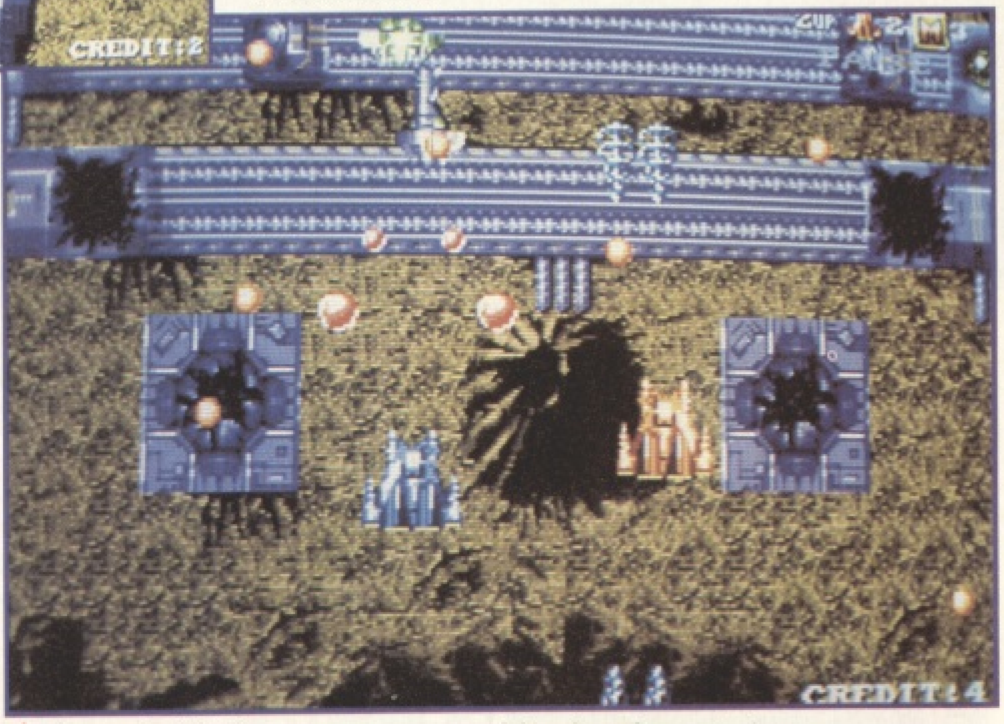
▲ *Strafing the Barrax defence installations.*

A LOAD OF BARRAX

The Barrax Empire has a huge amount of different craft in its attack ranks. In amongst the hoards of death-hungry aliens you'll even find invisible craft that try to ram your craft! Don't worry though, a shimmering field is visible and their cloaks falter when they're shot at. But the Empire has other surprises in store for you. In one round you must travel down an enemy trench - with a huge amount of guns occasionally popping out to take a pot shot at you! Battle Squadron also features some of the most diverse end-of-level guardians found in a Megadrive shoot 'em up!



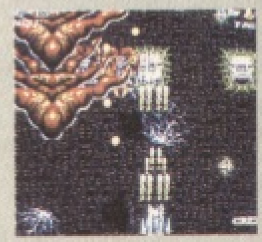
▲ *Two player laser death in Battle Squadron.*

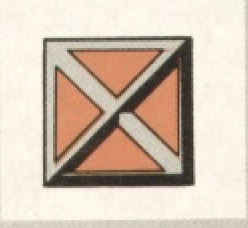


▲ *Armed with the spray weapon, blue is a force to be reckoned with.*



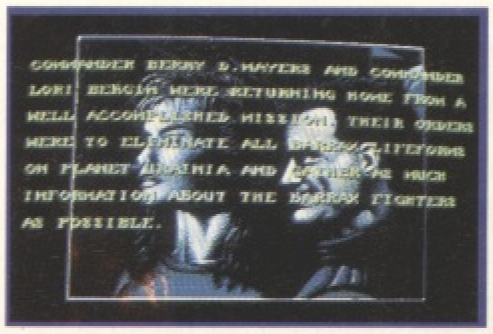
GREEN: Massive green front-fire accompanies this pod. When it's powered-up it's the best full-frontal attack weapon.





ORANGE: Another front fire pod, but also fires side laser bolts at the enemy when it's upgraded. Very versatile in the thick of battle.

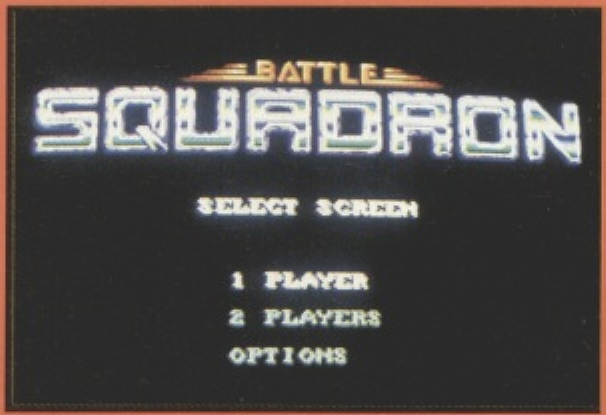




DESTRUCTION DUET

Battle Squadron is unique amongst the mass of Megadrive shoot 'em ups by having an option that enables two players to take on the might of the Barrax Empire. Elements of competition are added as players chase the power-ups! But if the game seems just too difficult in one-player, the front-end of the game includes an option to reduce the amount of enemy bullets, give more lives, more credits or even reduce the enemy bullets' speed!



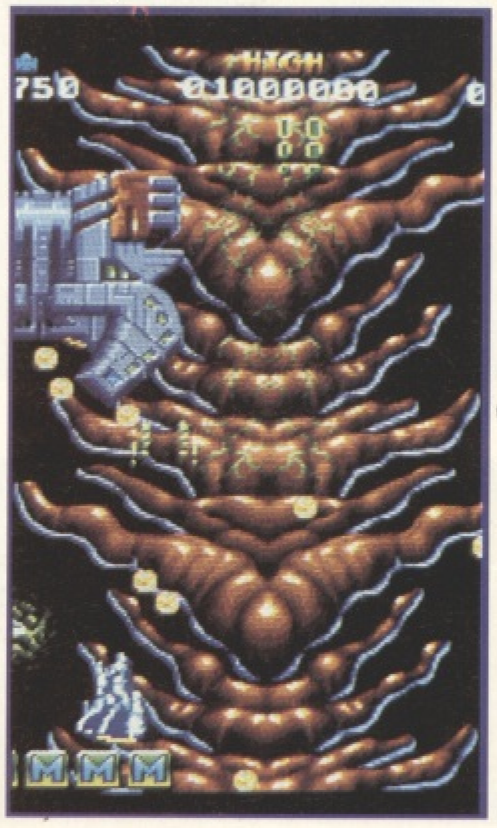


BY: 'TRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
RELEASE DATE: JAN
GAME DIFFICULTY: MED/HARD
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 1-5
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: GREAT

1-2 PLAYERS



▼ *Dangerous terrain threatens our heroes...*



COMMENT



JULIAN

Sporting some stunning graphics, this is one of the most attractive Megadrive blasters around - the backdrops and sprites are excellent. It's not just a pretty face, either - it's tough too, especially when you play it on the single-player option. The odds are really stacked against you, with a huge amount of enemy craft all with their sights locked onto your ship - if you don't grab some power-ups quick (and hold on to them) you don't stand much of a chance. Personally I love this sort of situation, but there are some people in the office who found the high difficulty level really offputting. Check it out if you're a hardened blasting fan.

PRESENTATION 91%
The game is very well presented, with plenty of options. Nice presentation screens as well.

GRAPHICS 91%
A nice variety in all the backdrops and sprites.

SOUND 72%
Decent enough effects, but the tunes are slightly lacking.

PLAYABILITY 87%
Plenty of really decent shoot 'em up thrills on offer - shame about the extra weapons though.

LASTABILITY 81%
The two-player option keeps the thrill-level high, and in the single-player mode there's plenty of long-term challenge.

OVERALL 85%
A tough and addictive vertical scroller, which could have done with some better power-up weapons. Recommended to hardened blasting freaks.

SNAKE RATTLE 'N'

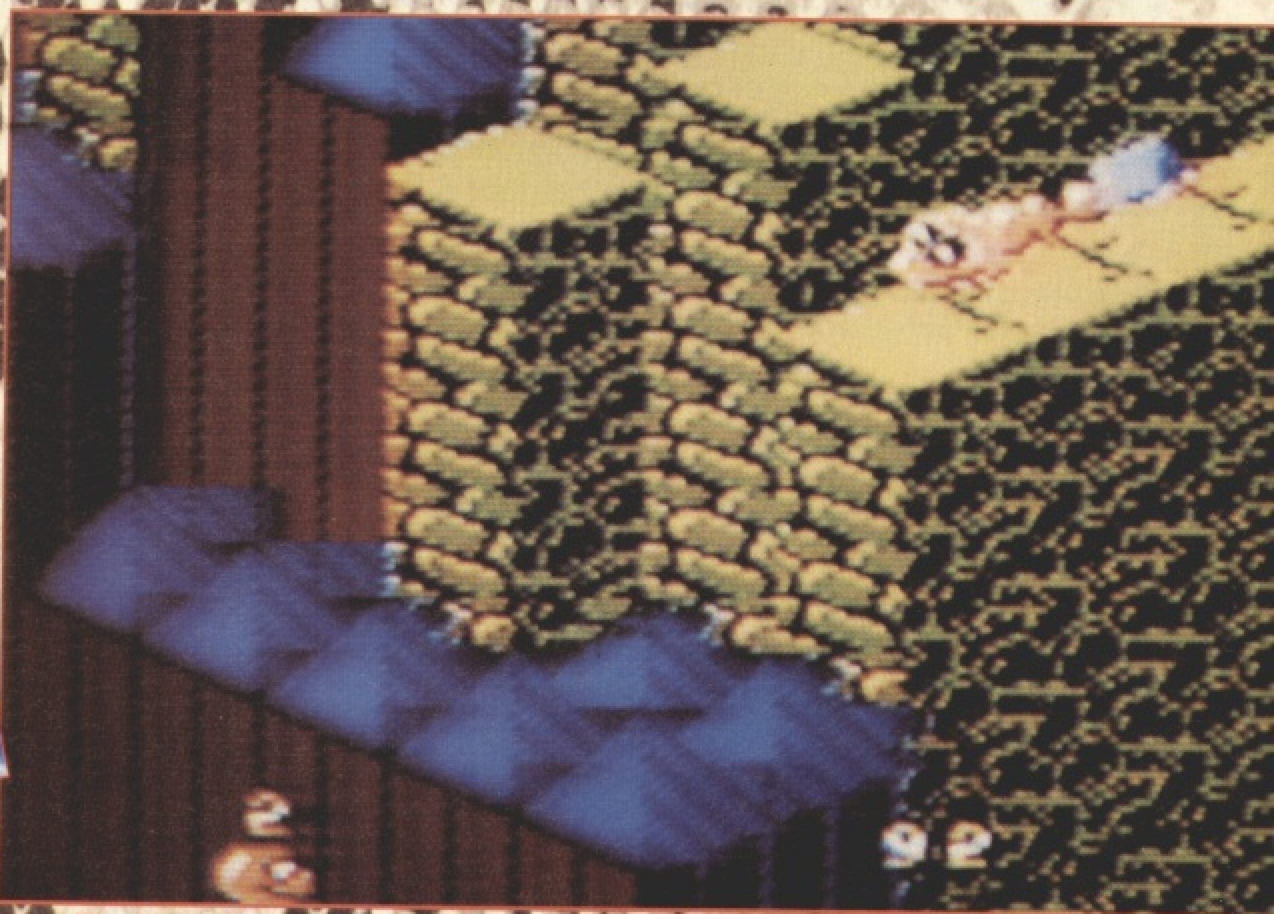
Life as a snake used to be easy. It was simply a question of slithering around, pouncing on small furry mammals, and shedding skin once in a while. But our two heroes - Rattle and Roll - live in a bizarre world composed of checkerboard platforms, seas, waterfalls and (oddly enough) manhole covers. Their object is to escape from each level by eating enough Nibbly Pibblys - little round creatures that infest the landscape - to make them heavy enough to ring a bell at the top of the weighing machine found on each level, and so open a door to the next stage.

Things are not as straightforward as they sound. Monsters try to kill the reptiles at every turn: if one of the snakes dawdles in the water too long, Jaws races to catch him and eat him, and on land Big Foot (who is, surprisingly, a big foot) attempts to squash him. And there's always the danger of plummeting off the edge of the screen while leaping from platform to platform!

The snakes gain length by flicking their tongues at Nibbly Pibblys, sucking them into their mouths, and spitting out the remains. Bonus items, such as clockwork keys, are collected for extra speed and points to help make life easier...



▲ Snake's got to avoid falling off the cliff in his travels.



▲ The blue blocks fly out and try to push our hero off the cliff.

GETTING HISSED

Rattle and Roll collect various tokens in their travels that help them:



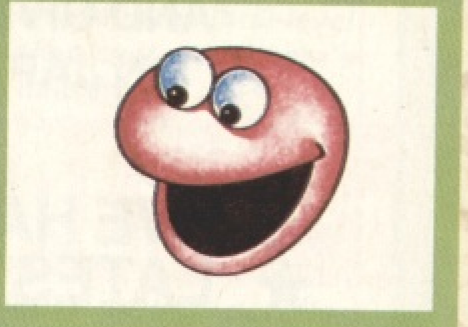
CLOCKWORK KEY: Increases the snake's speed.



DIAMOND: Gives temporary invincibility.



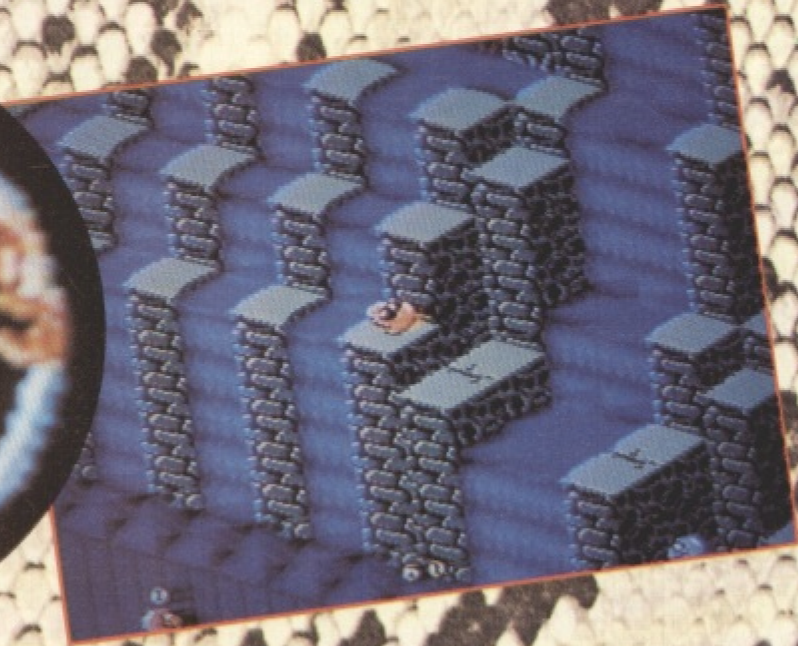
FORKED TONGUE: Adds length to the tongue.



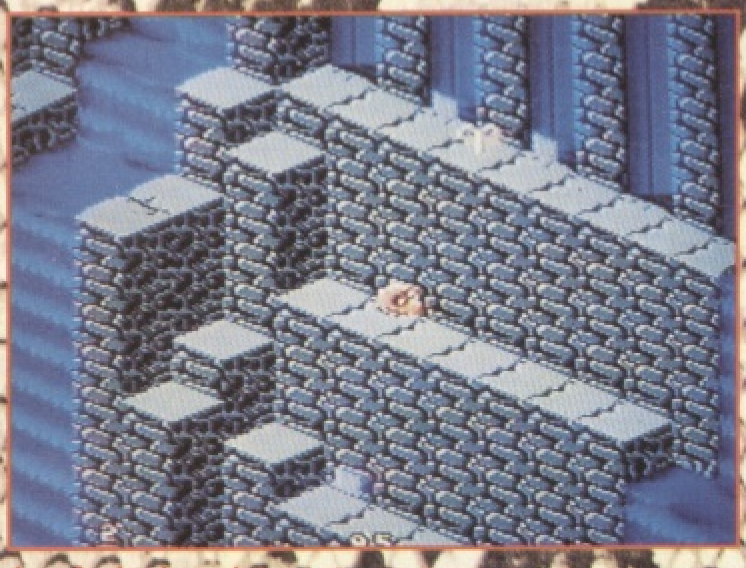
BIG SNAKE HEAD: Gives up to 5000 points.



ROLL



▲ The leaps must be timed perfectly, otherwise the waterfalls will kill the snake.



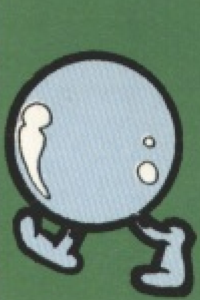
▲ A clockwork key above, but how do you there?





▲ You can ring my bell, says Anita Ward.

COMMENT



MATT

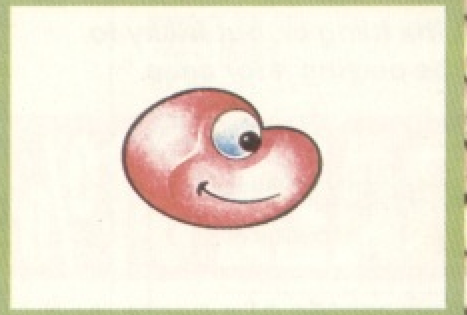
The Nintendo software collection keeps getting better and better, and the arrival of Snake, Rattle 'n' Roll proves the point. The surreal 3D landscape, with its multiple levels and manholes, provides fun in itself - and the gameplay is overflowing with quality. It's become a firm favourite here in the MEAN MACHINES offices, even enticing Gary away from his loitering at Centrepoint shelter. The humour makes the game, as the baddies are all weird objects (the toilet seat is my favourite!). If fun and frolics are what you're after, this is definitely the thing for you - rush out and demand a copy now!



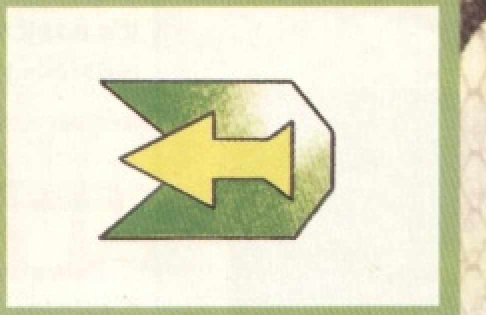


▲ The clock gives extra time - grab it!





SMALL SNAKE HEAD: Gives an extra life.



DIRECTIONAL ARROWS: Reverses the snake's movement temporarily.



CLOCK: Gives extra time in which to complete the level.

TWO-PLAYER LAFFS

Snake, Rattle 'n' Roll can be played either by one player, or two players simultaneously! The two-player mode is a load of laughs, with each snake racing to eat the Nibbly Pibblys first - the greedy beggars!



▲ Deep in the land of the Nibbly Pibblys

DOWN IN THE SEWER

Dotted around the landscapes are loads of manhole covers. Lift these up and something usually pops out from underneath - it might be a Nibbly Pibbly, a clock, an extra life, or your snake might even be dragged into the hole to tackle a bonus screen! But watch out, because sometimes there's a baddie lurking in there just waiting to get you...



COMMENT

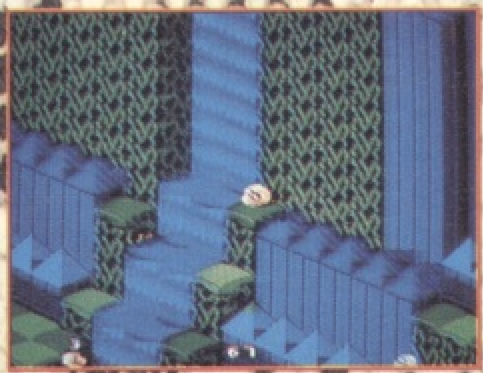


JULIAN

What a game! Snake, Rattle 'n' Roll is one of the most original games seen in years, and simply oozes quality. The graphics are stunning, with beautifully drawn scrolling forced perspective 3D backdrops and some great sprites - the snakes themselves are utterly brilliant. But it's the playability that makes this one of the most compulsive Nintendo games around. The landscapes are fiendishly designed to test your dexterity to its limit, and on later levels you're required to take some amazingly convoluted and precarious routes to the door! But even though it's tough, the game's sheer fun keeps you glued to the Nintendo for hours on end. The simultaneous two-player option is the icing on the cake! Snake, Rattle 'n' Roll is an incredible game and is a vital addition to your Nintendo software collection.



▲ No enemies about at the moment, but what's under the manholes?





BY: RARE

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: FEB
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 3
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: GREAT

1-2 PLAYERS

PRESENTATION 83%

The feel of the game maintains a surreal, jokey atmosphere from the beginning.

GRAPHICS 93%

Toilet seats, sewers, giant disembodied feet - a graphical heaven!

SOUND 88%

Funky get-down red-hot licks gyrate your hips and flange your zoob.

PLAYABILITY 97%

The movement of the snakes is fluid, the difficulty pitched just right, and the landscapes add challenge.

LASTABILITY 92%

It's easy to get the hang of, but tricky to master - you'll be playing it for ages.

OVERALL 94%

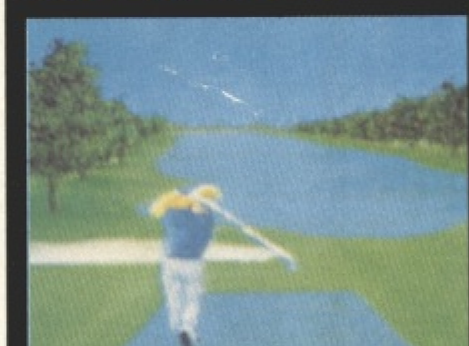
A slinky, hissing reptile of a game, and fangs to Rare another great Nintendo cart!

ニュース NEWS



SUPER FAMICOM
スーパーファミコン®

The Super Famicom is surely the most eagerly-awaited console of all time. After what seems like years of rumours and gossip, Nintendo have finally launched their machine. Julian Rignall takes a look at it and gets his flabber well and truly gasted.







HOW BIG

The Super Famicom is fairly unassuming in its looks. Its tough, grey plastic case measures 200mm x 240mm x 60mm, and has a cartridge slot, a power switch, a cartridge eject button and a reset switch. But beneath that meek exterior lies a set of the most powerful chips ever seen in a home entertainment system. The CPU is a custom-made 16-bit processor, and there are a variety of custom chips which give stunning graphics - the maximum resolution is 2048x256 pixels and up to 256 colours can be displayed on-screen from a palette of 32,768 colours!

Other hardware features include four independent playfields (which means up to four levels of parallax scrolling in hardware), a polygon chip (for producing filled-3D graphics similar to arcade machines like Hard Drivin'), and a huge amount of hardware sprites, with sizing, scaling and flipping taken care of by the machine.



SOUNDS AMAZING

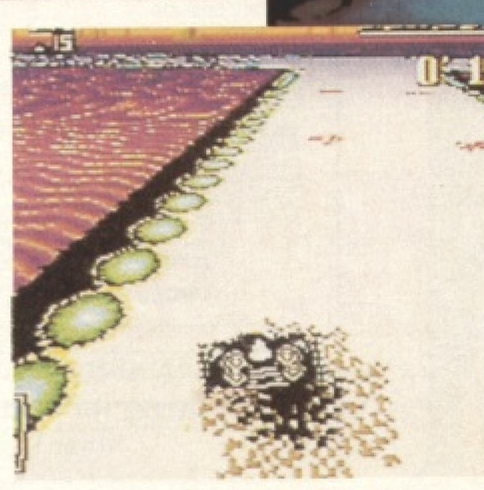
The PCM/digital sound chip is controlled by another 16-bit processor, and the end result is absolutely stunning - rich stereo music and effects of the like never heard before on a console or computer. Just wait until you hear the honky-tonk piano music on the third screen of Super Mario IV - it's incredible!



F-ZERO



The only other game available at the moment is F-Zero, a hell-for-leather 3D road racing game, which places you at the controls of a nippy airskimmer. Audio-visually, there's nothing to touch this on any machine at the moment - the ultra-fast, ultra-smooth, ultra-colourful 3D graphics are nothing short of astonishing - and it's as playable as heck, too!



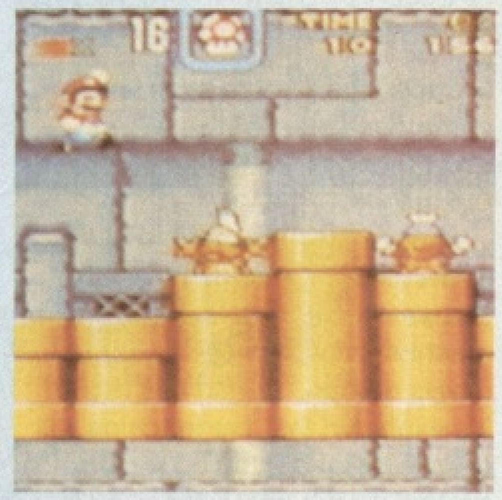


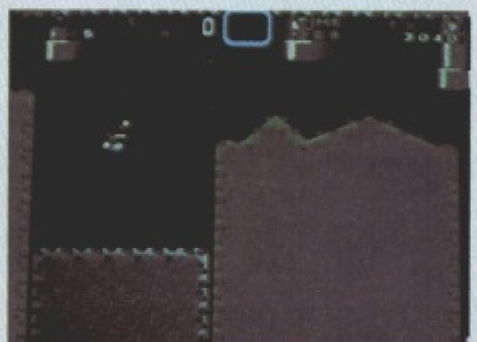
It's fitting that Mario, the most popular of all the Nintendo heroes, should star in the first Super Famicom game - and here he is in Super Mario Bros IV.

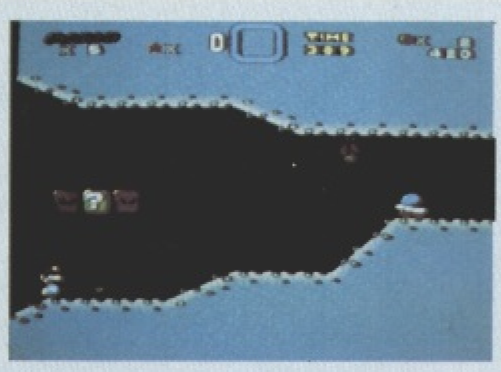
Featuring the traditional Super Mario platforms and ladders style of gameplay, it's the player's task to guide Mario across a vast array of horizontally scrolling landscapes in search of Princess Mushroom. It's packed with features, and Mario can fly, ride cute little dragons, fire missiles and swim.

The graphics are excellent, with an amazing amount of detail - each character is beautifully animated and some of the graphical effects are stunning. The sound is also knock-out, with fantastic tunes (the racing piano piece and the echoey cavern music are our favourites) and some incredible effects.

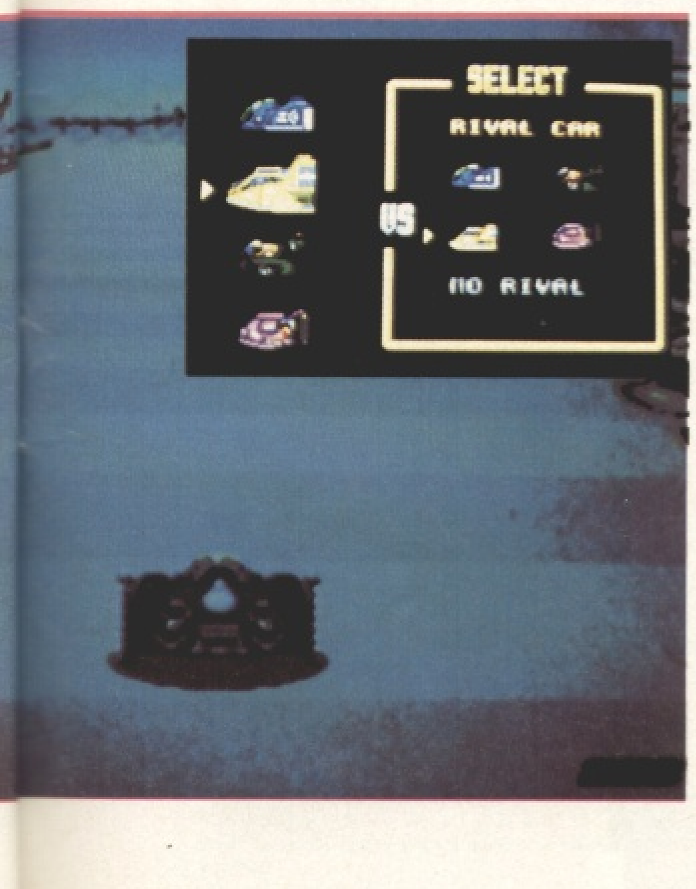
Given away free with the machine in Japan, Super Mario IV is a fantastic game, and gives us just a glimpse of the Super Famicom's incredible potential.













IN CONTROL

The Super Famicom control pads offer the most comprehensive array of buttons yet seen! On the left is the normal joypad directional controller, and on the right are four independent fire buttons. And there's more - on the rear left and right of the controller are two more long buttons which could be used as steering controls or two more fire buttons! The controllers are very comfortable to hold, and although four fire buttons sound like a bit too much, it doesn't take very long to get used to them.



ニュース NEWS

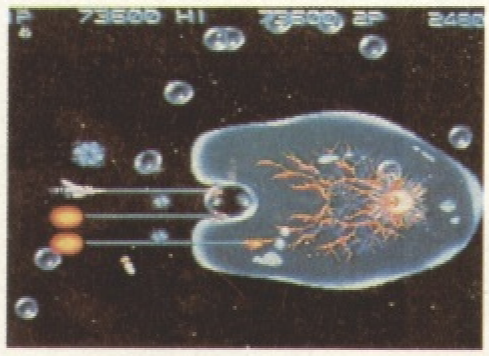
OTHER GAMES COMING SOON

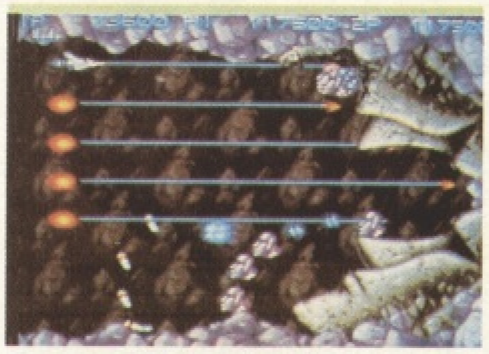
All over the world, software houses are falling over themselves to get hold of Supe, Famicom development kits, and amongst some of the many games coming out very soon are...

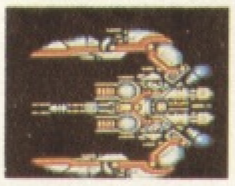
SUPER GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS: A rezzed-up version of the Capcom coin-op which sports some incredible graphics and amazing sound.
R-TYPE II: The amazingly popular horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up which features superb graphics.

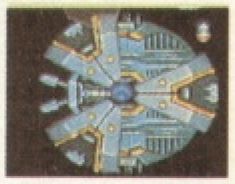


GRADIUS III: Another horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up which is better known in the UK as Vulcan Venture. The Super Famicom version's got extra levels and looks identical to the coin-op.









POPULOUS: All the features of the original, but with improved graphics and sound and six new landscapes.





WHERE, WHEN

In Japan the Super Famicom sells at the equivalent of just over £90.00 (with a free copy of Super Mario Bros IV). Early imported versions of the machine sold for between £300.00 and £400.00 due to massive shortages of the machine in Japan, but as supply meets demand during this month, it's expected that the machine will drop to around £200.00 - shop around for the best prices.

Nintendo have yet to set an official Super Famicom release date for the UK, but it's expected to hit the US just before Christmas this year, and will more than likely be released in Europe during 1992.

BOMBUZAL: A conversion of Mirrorsoft's fairly addictive puzzle game.

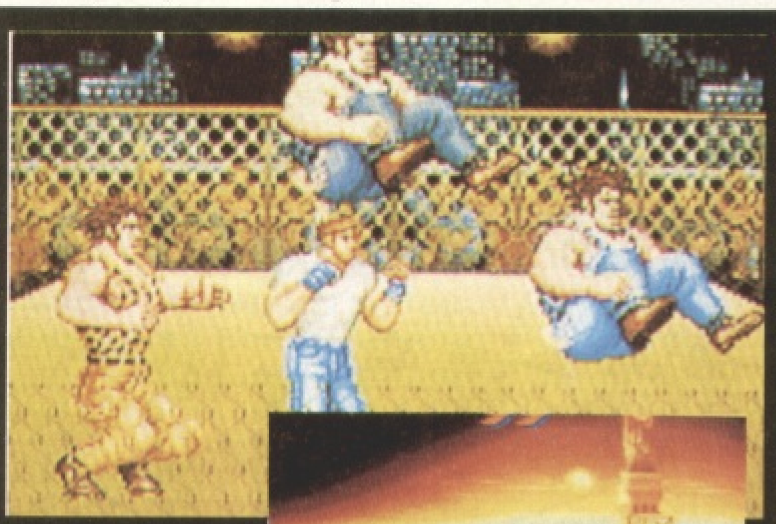




SIM CITY: The city simulation where you can build your very own connurbation and run it. And destroy it if you're feeling evil.

FINAL FIGHT: Another pixel-perfect arcade conversion, this time of the brilliant Capcom beat 'em up.















THE VERDICT

What can I say? The Super Famicom is the bees-knees. It's mega. Boston. Wizard. Captain. Fab. Brill. Amazing. Fantastic... I'm sure you get the idea.

It out-performs every console and home computer currently available, and is built with expansion in mind - rumour has it that a CD-ROM, keyboard, disk drive and modem are all currently in development.

The two games we've seen are amazing, but according to many Super Famicom programming sources, they apparently show just a little of the machine's potential! The Super Famicom is definitely the greatest games machine yet seen, and is our tip to become the games machine of the early 1990's.

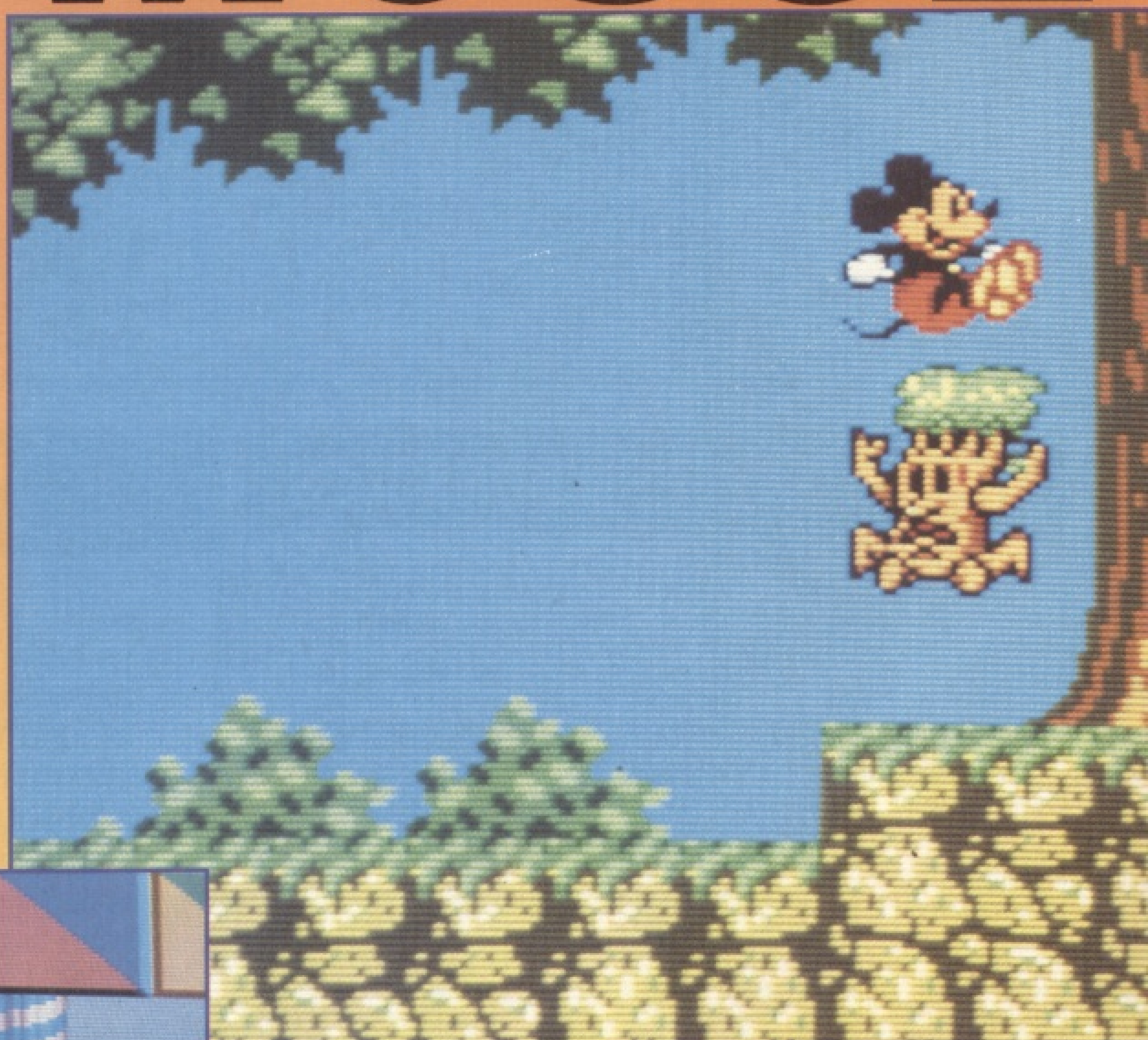
MICKEY MOUSE

Nearly everyone is happy in Vera City, especially Mickey and Minnie Mouse. The problem is, one person is incredibly jealous of Minnie's beauty and popularity. Mizrabel the evil witch was having a particularly bad day, and so decided to kidnap Minnie, using her evil magic to spirit her away to the Castle of Illusion. That's where she is now, and Mickey wants you to help him rescue her!

That's where the problems really start. When Mickey arrives at the Castle of Illusion, he finds out that to stand any chance of doing away with the evil Mizrabel, he has to infiltrate seven huge platform-infested scrolling levels. At the end of each is a Master of Illusion. Each guards a rainbow jewel, and when Mickey has them all he can use the power to overthrow Mizrabel in a final, epic confrontation!



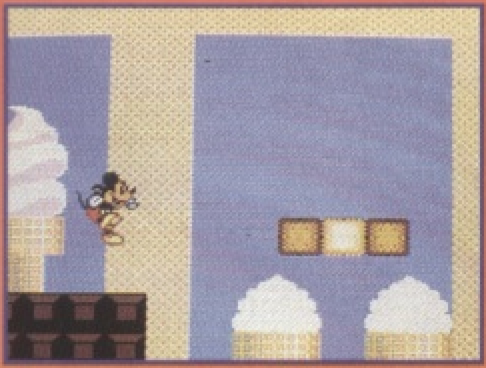
▲ If you go down to the woods today...



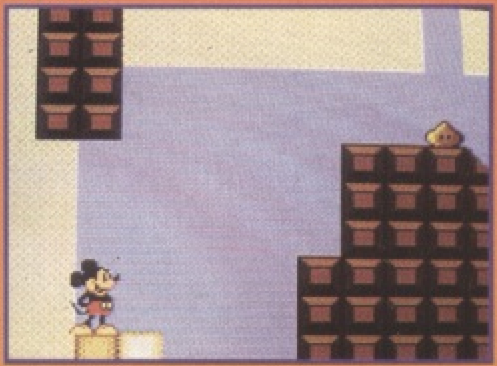
▲ Bottom bouncing japes abound in Mickey Mouse!







▲ Mickey arrives in Ice-Cream Land!



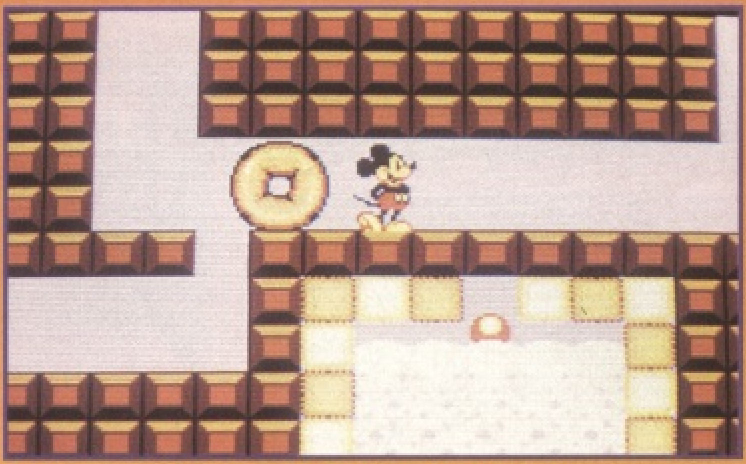


COMMENT



MATT

Crikey! Sega have done Mickey Mouse proud with this absolutely superb platform game! Perhaps the reason behind its success is the fact that they "borrowed" elements from both the Nintendo Mario and Mega Man series. Some of the platform puzzles I recognised as coming straight out of Mega Man 2! That's no bad thing though, because Mickey Mouse is just so good to play that you'll be beavering away on your Sega for months. The graphics are brilliant - each of the seven worlds has its own theme, my fave has to be the ice-cream level (you can even swim in the ice-cream!). For graphical variety, addictive nature and brilliance of gameplay, Mickey Mouse is the best Sega release for a long while. Buy it now!



▲ Pursued by the doughnuts of doom!



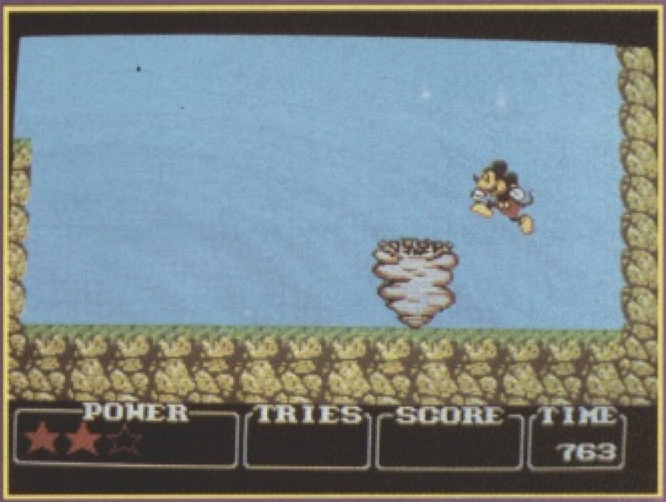


ILLUSION CONFUSION

On the way to rescuing Minnie, there's plenty of devious platform traps that await the plucky animated hero. There's the usual smattering of platforms that drop from under your feet, conveyor belts and lifts. But on later levels, the game is so keen to make you goof (no pun intended) that some platforms don't actually exist - and jumping onto them just sends Mickey falling down to his doom! As with a lot of games of this type, there's plenty of hidden bonuses to be discovered. Hidden treasure chests abound, and to make them appear, Mickey must use his amazing bouncing bottom trick! On a couple of levels the platform gameplay is forsaken as Mickey has the power to swim.

TAKING THE MICKEY

Taking control of the Disney legend couldn't be simpler! The Sega joypad enables Mickey to run around, duck and jump with the best of 'em, but when it comes to blatting the enemy sprites, Mickey is spoilt for choice. He can pick up various objects dotted around the backgrounds and chuck them at the meanies, but the expert mouse uses his bottom to squash anything in his path! Whilst jumping, Mickey can change his gigantic leap into a mega-destructive bottom bomb which not only squashes any enemy sprites but also sends him up into the air again! This especially useful if you have to reach a ledge that's seemingly too high.



▲ Meet the first end-of-level guardian!



▲ Barrels of fun with Mickey!

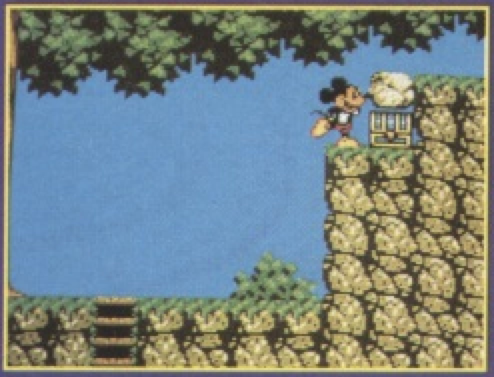


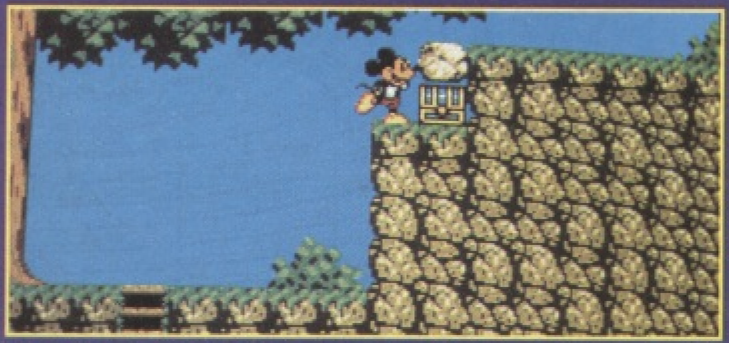
▲ Collect the cake for extra energy!



CHEESY COMESTIBLES

There's a few helpful items dotted around the levels that actually aid Mickey in his quest. Most treasure chests yield pieces of yummy cake - and they come in two varieties. They either give Mickey back one star of energy, or if he's really lucky, the whole lot! Carefully hidden are flashing stars. These actually enable Mickey to pick up more energy - thus extending his life expectancy. Occasionally, mouse ears are located. These give extra lives!







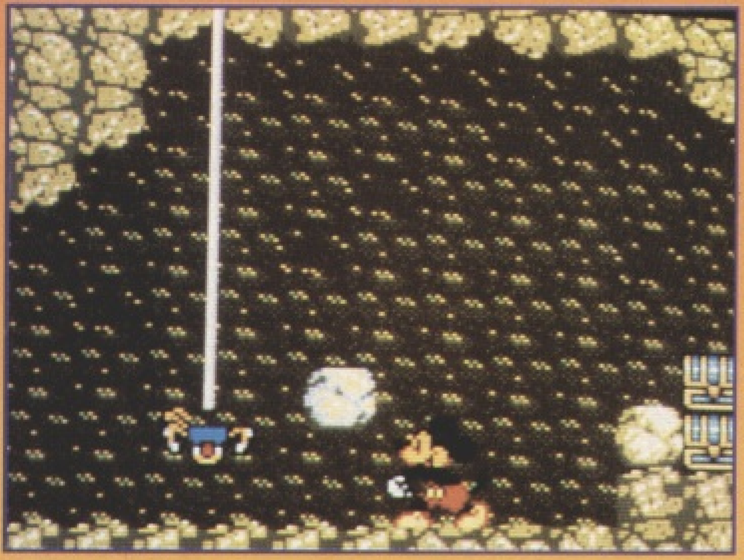
▲ *Mickey continues his platform voyage in Ice-Cream land.*

COMMENT

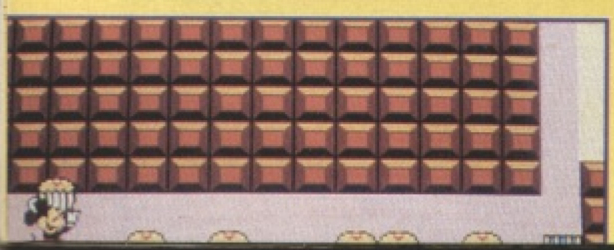


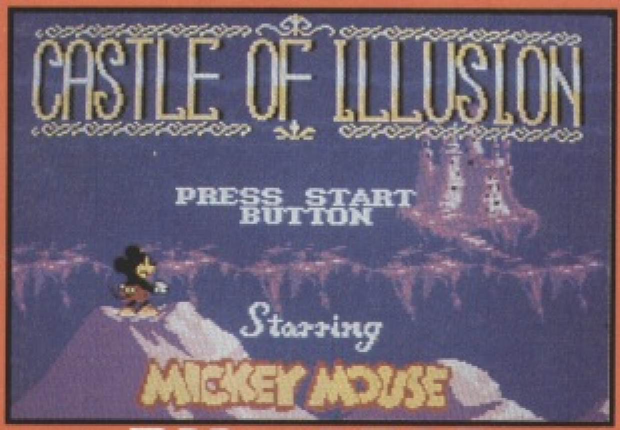
JULIAN

He might be over 50 years old, but Mickey Mouse is one of the most athletic heroes seen in a video game! There are loads of hazards to overcome, and you need to call on all your platform skills to guide Mickey past the tricky obstacles and traps evil witch Mizrabel has laid! To go along with the tough and challenging gameplay are some absolutely stunning graphics! The Mickey Mouse sprite is beautifully animated and looks just like he's been lifted straight out of a cartoon - wait until you see some of the expressions he pulls, and just watch him flail his arms when he teeters on the edge of a precipice! Not only are the sprites excellent, the backgrounds are also superb, with bright and colourful cartoon-style landscapes. Mickey Mouse is the best Sega game seen in a long time - make it a priority purchase.









BY: SEGA

PRICE: £29.99

RELEASE DATE: FEB
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES:
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: SPIFFING

1 PLAYERS

PRESENTATION 90%

Disney-esque intro screens and a nice cartoon-like feel in the game itself.

GRAPHICS 94%

Mickey is a treat to watch, and he's accompanied by brilliant enemy sprites and backdrops.

SOUND 87%

Cutesy tinkling tunes that the Sega does so well!

PLAYABILITY 95%

Mega-addictive platform gameplay makes Mickey Mouse a real winner!

LASTABILITY 92%

Loads of level to conquer - and plenty of secret rooms and bonuses.

OVERALL 93%

One of the greatest Sega releases we've seen for a long while. Go get it as soon as possible!

£200.00 WORTH OF SOFTWARE ON OFFER!!!

We've got five prizes of £200.00 worth of console software on offer in this mega competition. It's a bit of a strange one - we want you to tick the relevant boxes below (make sure you read the questions before answering). Why? So we can look at all the views and suggestions you put below, and make MEAN MACHINES even better, of course!

When you've finished ticking the relevant boxes, we want you to carefully remove this page from the magazine, pop it into an envelope and send it off to: MEAN MACHINES QUESTIONNAIRE, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. The closing date is Feb 16th. After that day we'll be looking at all the questionnaires - and the first five pulled out of the sack will win their senders the prizes!

NAME.................................

ADDRESS.............................

....

....

....

AGE......................................

SEX

☐ MALE
☐ FEMALE

WHAT MACHINE(S) DO YOU OWN?

☐ AMIGA
☐ AMSTRAD
☐ ATARI ST
☐ C64
☐ GX4000
☐ GAMEBOY
☐ GAME GEAR
☐ LYNX
☐ MEGADRIVE
☐ NINTENDO
☐ PC COMPATIBLE
☐ PC ENGINE
☐ SEGA
☐ SPECTRUM
☐ SUPER FAMICOM

WHAT MACHINE (IF ANY) ARE YOU INTENDING TO BUY IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS?

☐ AMIGA
☐ AMSTRAD
☐ ATARI ST
☐ C64
☐ GX4000
☐ GAMEBOY
☐ GAME GEAR
☐ LYNX
☐ MEGADRIVE
☐ NINTENDO
☐ PC COMPATIBLE
☐ PC ENGINE
☐ SEGA
☐ SPECTRUM
☐ SUPER FAMICOM

HOW MUCH DO YOU SPEND ON COMPUTER GAMES PER MONTH?

☐ LESS THAN £10
☐ £10-£15
☐ £15-£25
☐ £25-£30
☐ £35-£40
☐ £45-£50
☐ £50+

HOW MANY GAMES DO YOU BUY PER MONTH?

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5+

THE MAGAZINE

WHICH ISSUES OF MEAN MACHINES HAVE YOU BOUGHT?

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4

HOW MANY PEOPLE READ YOUR COPY OF MEAN MACHINES?

PLEASE MARK THE FOLLOWING MAGAZINE SECTIONS OUT OF 10 (1=VERY BAD 10=BRILLIANT)

☐ COVERS
☐ CONTENTS
☐ EDITORIAL
☐ NEWS
☐ NEWS FROM AMERICA
☐ NEWS FROM JAPAN
☐ YOB'S MAILBAG
☐ JAZZA'S Q+A
☐ TIPS
☐ HELPLINE
☐ CHARTS
☐ NEXT MONTH
☐ YOB'S GOSSIP
☐ HOTLINES
☐ COMPETITIONS
☐ REVIEWS
☐ PREVIEWS

IS THE TEXT IN THE REVIEW

☐ TOO LONG
☐ TOO SHORT
☐ JUST RIGHT

WHEN MEAN MACHINES REVIEWS A GAME, ARE THE RATINGS USUALLY

☐ TOO HIGH
☐ TOO LOW
☐ JUST RIGHT

ARE THE SCREEN SHOTS

☐ TOO FEW
☐ TOO MANY
☐ JUST RIGHT

IS THE RATING SYSTEM

☐ BRILLIANT
☐ REASONABLE
☐ POOR

ARE MEAN MACHINES COVERS

☐ GREAT
☐ ALRIGHT
☐ BAD

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING FEATURES IN MEAN MACHINES?

ARCADE COLUMN

☐ YES
☐ NO

FEATURES ON PROGRAMMERS AND SOFTWARE HOUSES

☐ YES
☐ NO

£1000.00 WORTH OF SOFTWARE ON OFFER!!!

WHAT OTHER MAGS DO YOU READ/BUY

☐ ACE
☐ AMIGA ACTION
☐ AMIGA COMPUTING
☐ AMIGA FORMAT
☐ ATARI ST USER
☐ CLUB NINTENDO
☐ CRASH
☐ CU AMIGA
☐ NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS
☐ POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY
☐ ST ACTION
☐ ST FORMAT
☐ RAZE
☐ YOUR SINCLAIR
☐ THE ONE
☐ SEGA POWER
☐ PC LEISURE
☐ COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES

IF YOU GET CLUB NINTENDO, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT?

☐ GREAT
☐ OK
☐ POOR

IF YOU GET CLUB NINTENDO, DO THE REVIEWS INFLUENCE YOU WHEN YOU BUY A GAME?

☐ ALL THE TIME
☐ SOMETIMES
☐ NEVER

DO MEAN MACHINES REVIEWS INFLUENCE YOU WHEN YOU BUY A GAME?

☐ ALL THE TIME
☐ SOMETIMES
☐ NEVER

THIS BIT IS FOR SEGA MASTER SYSTEM OWNERS ONLY - IF YOU OWN A NINTENDO OR MEGADRIVE, DON'T ANSWER THE FOLLOWING THREE QUESTIONS

IS THE AMOUNT OF NINTENDO COVERAGE

☐ TOO MUCH
☐ TOO LITTLE
☐ JUST RIGHT

IS THE AMOUNT OF MEGADRIVE COVERAGE

☐ TOO MUCH
☐ TOO LITTLE
☐ JUST RIGHT

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE SUPER FAMICOM REVIEWS?

☐ YES
☐ NO

THIS BIT IS FOR NINTENDO OWNERS ONLY - IF YOU OWN A MEGADRIVE OR SEGA MASTER SYSTEM, DON'T ANSWER THE THREE QUESTIONS

IS THE AMOUNT OF SEGA MASTER SYSTEM COVERAGE

☐ TOO MUCH
☐ TOO LITTLE
☐ JUST RIGHT

IS THE AMOUNT OF MEGADRIVE COVERAGE

☐ TOO MUCH
☐ TOO LITTLE
☐ JUST RIGHT

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE SUPER FAMICOM REVIEWS?

☐ YES
☐ NO

MORE PULL-OUT POSTERS

☐ YES
☐ NO

THIS BIT IS FOR MEGADRIVE OWNERS ONLY - IF YOU OWN A NINTENDO OR SEGA MASTER SYSTEM, DON'T ANSWER THE FOLLOWING THREE QUESTIONS

IS THE AMOUNT OF NINTENDO COVERAGE

☐ TOO MUCH
☐ TOO LITTLE
☐ JUST RIGHT

IS THE AMOUNT OF SEGA MASTER SYSTEM COVERAGE

☐ TOO MUCH
☐ TOO LITTLE
☐ JUST RIGHT

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE SUPER FAMICOM REVIEWS?

☐ YES
☐ NO

DO YOU BUY COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES REGULARLY

☐ YES
☐ NO

IF YOU DO BUY COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES MAGAZINE, WHY DO YOU BUY IT? (TICK ONE OR MORE BOXES)

☐ IT COVERS EVERYTHING THAT'S NEW
☐ IT'S CHEAP
☐ IT TELLS ME EVERYTHING THAT'S NEW
☐ ITS CONSOLE COVERAGE IS GOOD
☐ IT TELLS ME ABOUT OTHER MACHINES THAT I'VE GOT
☐ IT'S FULL OF REVIEWS

SINCE YOU STARTED BUYING MEAN MACHINES HOW MANY ISSUES OF COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES MAGAZINE HAVE YOU BOUGHT

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4

IS THIS MORE OR LESS THAN USUAL

☐ MORE
☐ LESS

IF YOU OWN A GAMEBOY AND EITHER A NINTENDO, SEGA MASTER SYSTEM OR MEGADRIVE, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION.

WOULD YOU LIKE MORE GAMEBOY COVERAGE, EVEN THOUGH IT MEANT LESS COVERAGE FOR YOUR MACHINE?

☐ YES, A LOT MORE
☐ A LITTLE BIT MORE
☐ IT'S JUST RIGHT AS IT IS

IF I WIN I WOULD LIKE THE FOLLOWING GAMES

....

....

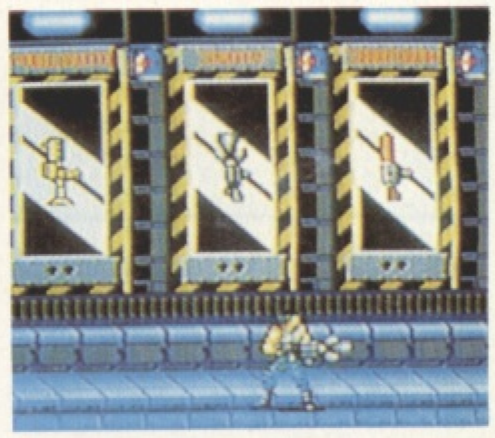
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THE INCREDIBLE CONSOLE GIVE-AWAY!

WIN!



A FABULOUS SUPER FAMICOM THREE MEGADRIVES AND COPIES OF MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE 100 TURTLES SEW-ON PATCHES

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

Every issue, MEAN MACHINES proves it's the best magazine around with its in-depth reviews, previews, and inside news. Now MEAN MACHINES truly blows away the rivals with the best competition in the history of consoles. Thanks to those wonderful people at Dai Ichi Consoles, you can win the latest and greatest games machine - the SUPER FAMICOM! There's no doubt that this is the best console ever, with graphics and sound of awesome quality - and games worthy of the system, like Super Mario Bros IV and F-Zero.

But that's not all! Three runners-up will get a Megadrive and a copy of Midnight Resistance - hardly a booby prize. And there's still more: six third-prize winners will receive a copy of Midnight Resistance, and a hundred (count 'em) fourth prizes of Turtle sew-on patches are up for grabs for the lucky entrants. There's no way you can afford to miss out on this amazing comp - enter now!

THE QUESTIONS:

1. What's the name of the company that makes the Super Famicom?
2. What lovable plumber stars in the free game with the Super Famicom?
3. Is Midnight Resistance:
a) A role-playing game;
b) A Peruvian nose-hair remover;
c) An arcade conversion?

Answers on an envelope or the back of a sealed-down letter to: WOW! FABULOUS FRUITY FAMICOM FOR ME COMP, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. Please have your entries arrive no later than February 1st 1991. One entry per household only - so no multiple postcards unless you want to be neutered!



SUPER OFF ROAD

Fancy yourself as a bit of boy racer then, eh? Well, this new NES cartridge enables you to test your mettle on eight of the most gruelling off-road circuits in existence against the greatest racers of this age. Make sure you pack your safety helmet though, because when you take the wheel of a powerful 4x4 truck, it's danger and excitement from the outset!

Like all the drivers who casually risk life and limb on the Off-Road circuit, there is only one goal. Winning races is the name of the game, and the resulting flow of prize money can be used to customise your motor at the Speed Shop.

But remember, you're up against the pros in this game, including the legendary Ivan "Ironman" Stewart himself, and as the season progresses the opposition continually soup-up their motors with their prize money. Equipment is no match for skill, though and on the Off-Road circuit, drivers are faced with unforgiving hazards like deep mudholes, steep hills and massive jumps.

But your truck has one subtle advantage over the non-human participants in the Off-Road championship - nitro power! One press of your joypad's B button gives your truck a huge nitro boost that catapults it down the track, but nitros are in pretty short supply...



▲ *A serious case of cloning in Super Off Road.*

SATELLITE LAUNCH

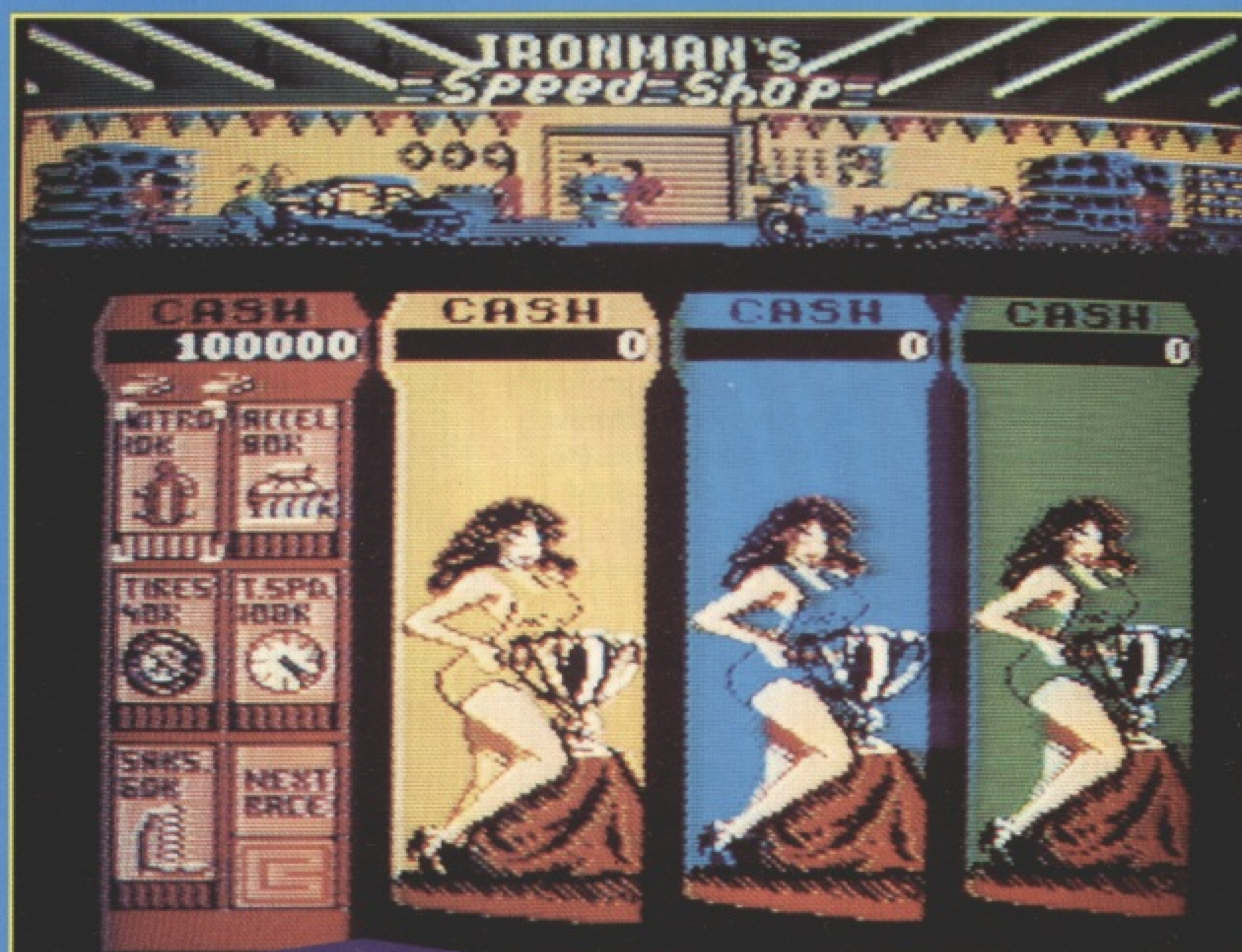
For four-player thrills and excitement, you can't go far wrong with the Nintendo Satellite. This little device enables NES owners to link four joypads into their Nintendo for use on games just like Super Off-Road Racer. Gameboy owners fed up with boring old two-player games can also buy a Satellite to connect up four machines. However, the slight downer is that for the moment, both Satellites are only available in Japan and America - a UK launch is expected later this year.

COMMENT



MATT

It really annoys me that Super Sprint never came out on the NES, but the release of Super Off-Road more than makes up for it! The graphics capture the coin-op almost perfectly with the minimum of flicker, and the gameplay's pretty decent as well, particularly in two-player mode. Super Off-Road is a tad on the slow side though, and the nitros aren't quite as effective as they should be. Still, not to worry though, because Super Off-Road is still a fine racer. RC Pro Am still ranks as the definitive NES racer, though.



SPEED SHOP CUSTOMISATION

Take your prize winnings (and your truck) to the Speed Shop and burn your money away jazzing up your motor. Extra nitros can be purchased, along with new engines to improve performance and acceleration. New tires are just the ticket for improving your road handling, and shocks help you to recover from particularly nasty jumps 'n' bumps.

▼ *Severe congestion at The Sidewinder.*

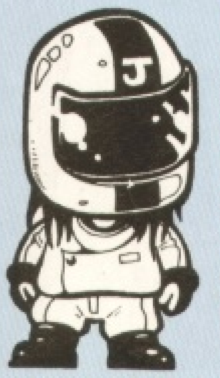








COMMENT



JULIAN

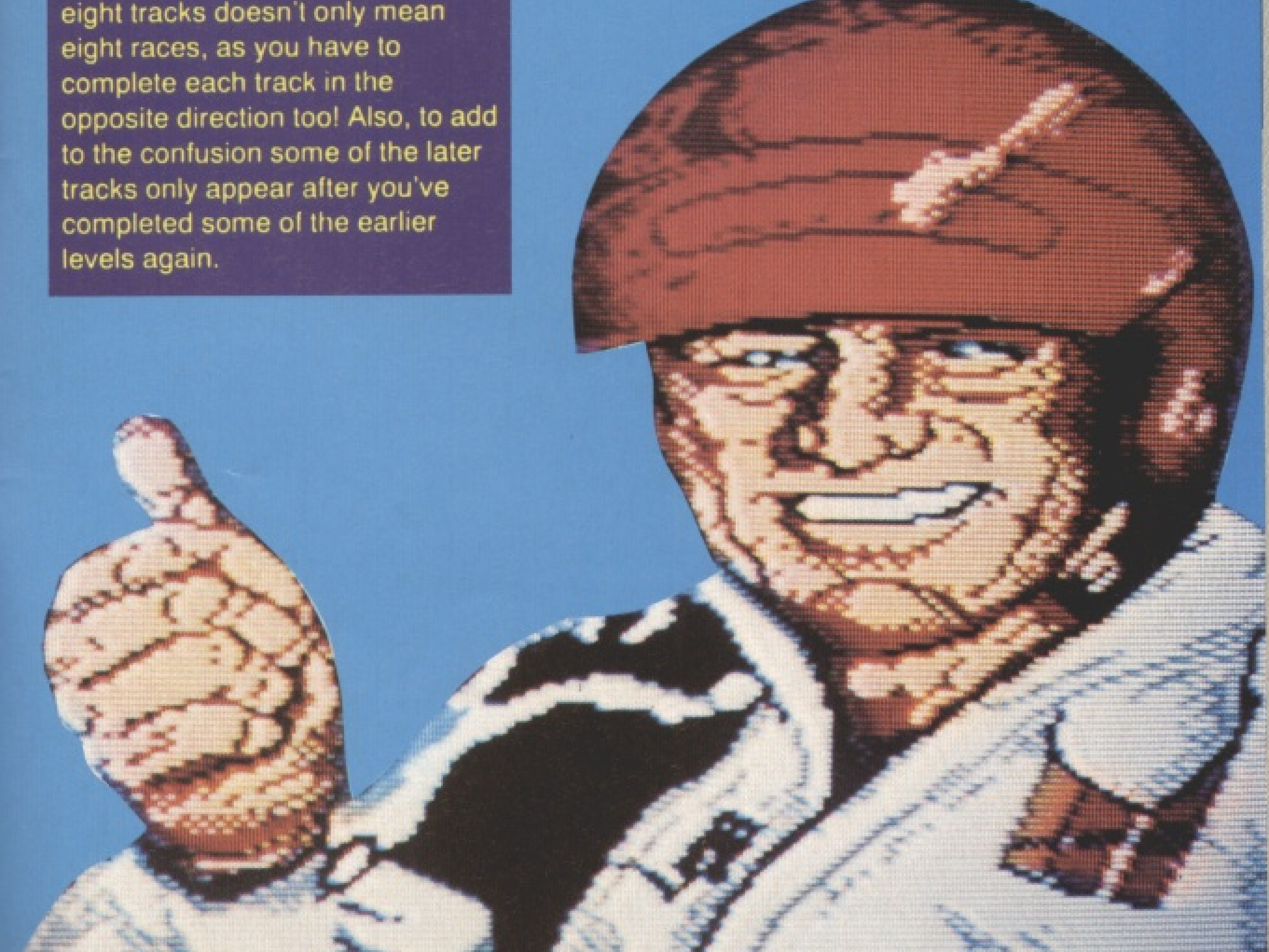
This multi-player coin-op was a pretty good laugh in the arcades, and I'm pleased to see that all the thrills and spills of the original have been captured in this excellent conversion. As a one-player game it's challenging and addictive - especially later on when those computer drivers start getting mean! Super Off-Road really comes into its own, though, when two players (or even four players if you manage to get hold of a satellite controller when it's available later on this year) simultaneously participate - many laughs (and more than a few punch-ups) are guaranteed! Check it out if you're after an original race game with plenty of built-in addiction - and put it right at the top of your shopping list if you get a satellite controller!

OFF-ROAD COIN-OP CONS

Leland's "Ironman" Super Off-Road Racer caused quite a stir on the arcade scene when it was first released, adding elements of forced perspective 3D to the jaded Super Sprint format. But here's a few things you may not know about this fabulous coin-op. For a start, it cheats! If you're doing too well for your own good, the computer racers automatically increase their performance to make the game a tad more challenging. Also, if you've got a high score and you enter exactly the same personal details before you start racing, the coin-op remembers your performance and changes the difficulty level accordingly. Pretty dirty, huh?

OFF-ROAD TRACK TRICKS

Eight Off-Road tracks have been crammed into this NES cart, and all carry very strange names, from The Sidewinder through The Fandango to The Big Dukes. But eight tracks doesn't only mean eight races, as you have to complete each track in the opposite direction too! Also, to add to the confusion some of the later tracks only appear after you've completed some of the earlier levels again.





BY: NINTENDO
PRICE: £34.99
RELEASE DATE: FEB
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY/MED
LIVES: 1
CONTINUES: 5
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: FINE

1-4 PLAYERS

PRESENTATION 90%
Loads of attractive presentation screens to wade through, and the whole game oozes quality.

GRAPHICS 83%
As close to the arcade as you can imagine, with great tracks and fluid animation on the trucks.

SOUND 85%
A great variety of tunes and spot effects.

PLAYABILITY 85%
A bit on the slow side, but Super Off-Road is unsurpassed with two (or more) players!

LASTABILITY 84%
Eight tracks doesn't sound like much, but there's plenty of different races and the multi-player game to sustain interest.

OVERALL 84%
If you're a Nintendo owner on the lookout for a multi-player Super Sprint-type game - this is the one!

GAME ROUN

Pipe Dream

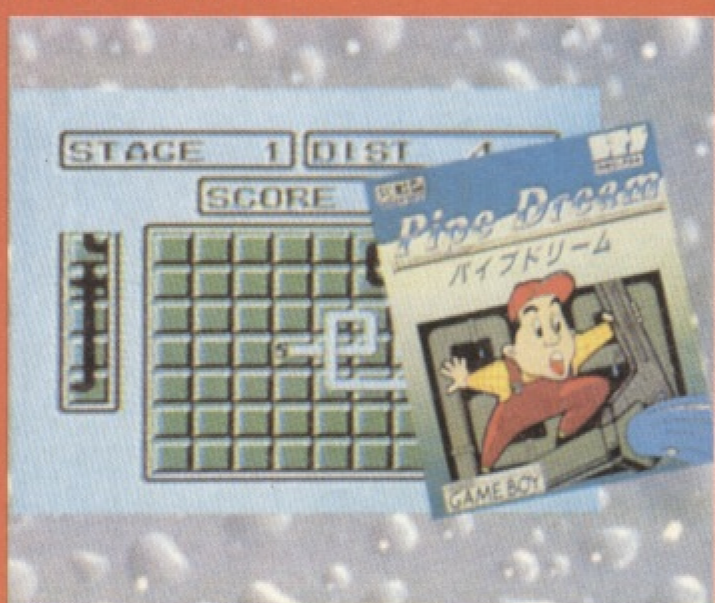
パイプドリーム

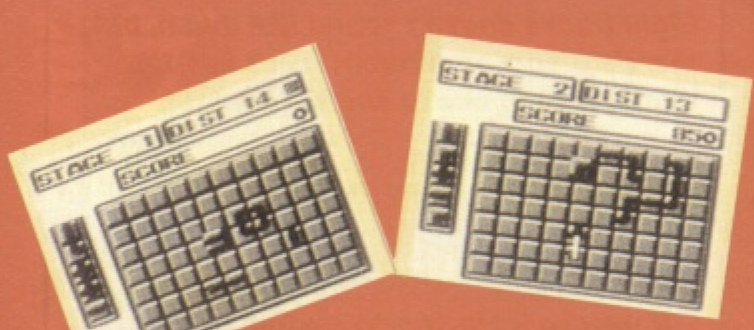
Yes, another game that casts you as a plumber - but this time there aren't any mushrooms in sight! The idea is to lay down sections of pipe and guide the flow of a repulsive substance called Flooz. On the left of the screen is the plumber's bag which shows the next five pipe segments as they will appear. The most points are gained by making loops - the more complicated the better! Later levels include dead squares, vats, and fish, with the Flooz increasing speed all the time. A password system enables the player to reenter the game at more advanced stages.

PRESENTATION	83%
GRAPHICS	81%
SOUND	78%
PLAYABILITY	92%
LASTABILITY	85%
OVERALL	87%

MATT: Pipe Dream is a very successful conversion of the coin-op, oozing (ho ho) addictiveness and playability. It's very easy at first, becoming progressively more difficult as it continues. The trick is to rack up high scores through making involved loops and bends, so the game can be played in all sorts of ways. An excellent product.

JAZ: Pipe Dream is a superb Gameboy title that'll have you tearing your hair out with frustration! It's incredibly addictive and is an ideal way to make those train or bus journeys whizz past. Check it out as soon as possible.



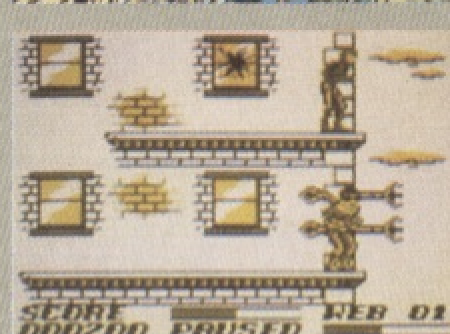


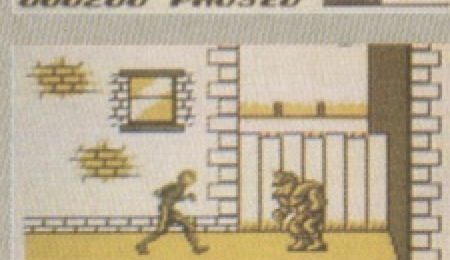


The world-famous web-slinger is back in town - and angry. His wife, Mary Jane, has been kidnapped by some heavies, and he's got to rescue her! This means battling through hordes of bad guys to the head honcho of each level: Mysterio, the Green Goblin, and the Scorpion are among these.

The stages vary in their layout; the first is a horizontally-scrolling fight through an alleyway, the second a vertical trip up the side of a building. Spidey can jump, punch, kick, crouch, and swing from webs, as well as spin them to keep the enemy at a distance.

Filled with an amazing number of TM's, the manual is informative and helpfully presented. Do you fancy yourself as a wall crawler?







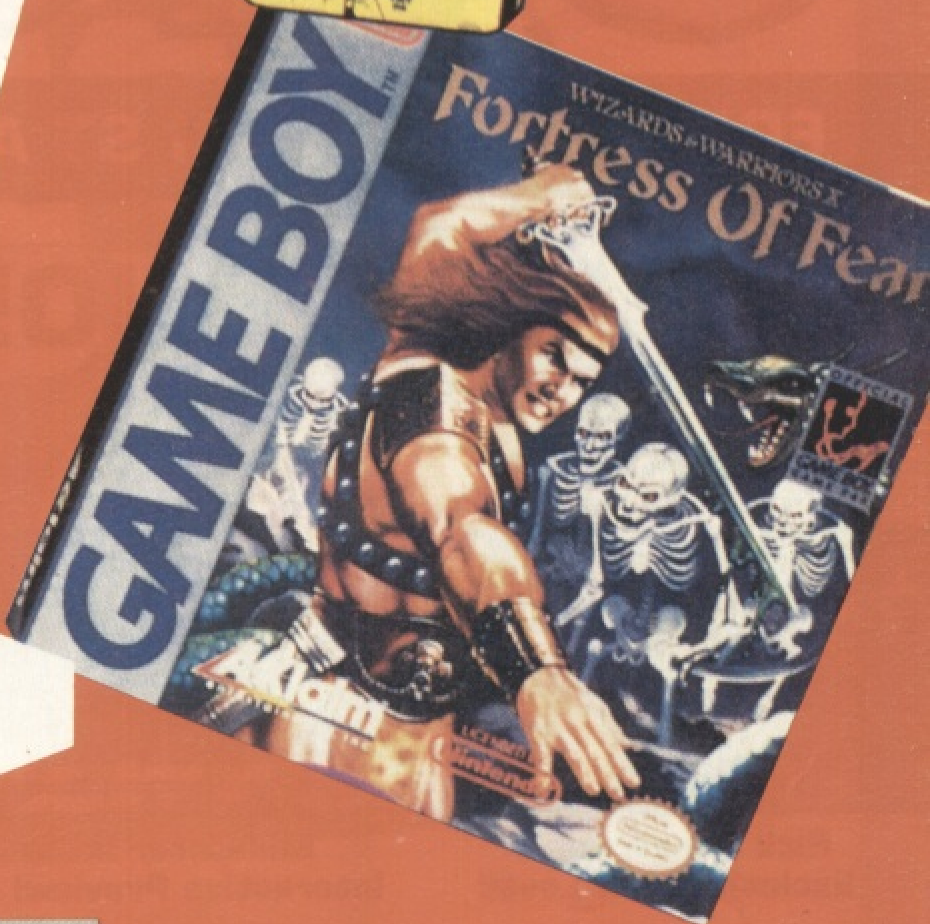
PRESENTATION	92%
GRAPHICS	87%
SOUND	82%
PLAYABILITY	84%
LASTABILITY	81%
OVERALL	85%

MATT: This game impresses from the start with its incredible intro graphics. Luckily the rest of the game maintains these high standards. It's definitely a worthwhile purchase, with the different playing styles and clever intermission sequences. Great stuff!

JAZ: This had me climbing the walls (crap joke of the month)! Spiderman is a challenging and enjoyable game with some excellent graphics, especially between screens. There's plenty of variety, and the game should appeal to beat 'em up and platform fanatics alike.

EBOY
ND-UP





Also known as Wizards and Warriors, FOF follows the story of Kuros, an iron sword-wielding warrior determined to destroy the Wizard Malkil and rescue the Princess Elaine from the fortress of the title.

Set over four levels, FOF is a horizontally-scrolling platform arcade adventure (phew!), with Kuros defeating foes, collecting keys and gems, and leaping from platform to platform. The keys open chests which reveal spells; these have effects such as healing, protection, and invincibility. Other items include Boots of jumping - for getting to those out-of-the-way places - food and drink for restoring health - and extra lives for extra lives!

PRESENTATION	84%
GRAPHICS	80%
SOUND	75%
PLAYABILITY	82%
LASTABILITY	74%
OVERALL	80%

MATT: This is something of a disappointment, simply because the excellent graphics are ruined by the bad blurring caused by the scrolling. It'd a shame, as otherwise FOF is of a high quality, combining strategy with arcade action. I'd say it's worth checking out if you like this sort of game, but bear in mind the blurring.

JAZ: It's a shame that this features such blurry scrolling, because otherwise it's a great game. The difficulty level is nicely pitched and there's plenty of challenge - give it a go.

PAC-MAN

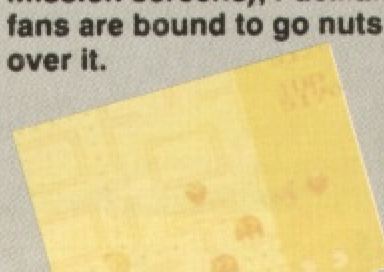
Everybody in the Western world knows who PacMan is - that yellow blob who's only purpose in life is to eat smaller blobs and avoid ghosts. A huge hit in the arcades about a thousand years ago, its addictiveness and cuteness have assured it a place in modern folklore.

The Gameboy version is a faithful replica of the coin-op, with one major difference (apart from the lack of colour) - the play area can be shown in two different ways: either as a full-screen mode, with small sprites, or in a magnified mode that only displays a section of the play area, but in much clearer detail. Starting with three lives, PacMan clears each screen of the small dots to progress to the next - large blobs make PacMan invulnerable for a short while, so it's the best time to munch dots and ghosts.

PRESENTATION	73%
GRAPHICS	79%
SOUND	84%
PLAYABILITY	82%
LASTABILITY	78%
OVERALL	80%

MATT: I don't think this game really cuts the mustard any more; it's certainly a classic, but the gameplay never varies and the graphics, while accurate, don't stretch the capabilities of the Gameboy at all. The choice of screen means that either the sprites are too tiny, or that you can't see the whole area! Still, if you were a fan of the coin-op, it's worth a look.

JAZ: PacMan's simple gameplay makes it an ideal arcade conversion for the Gameboy. The two screen modes is an excellent idea, and since this version packs all the features of the coin-op (including the intermission screens), PacMan fans are bound to go nuts over it.

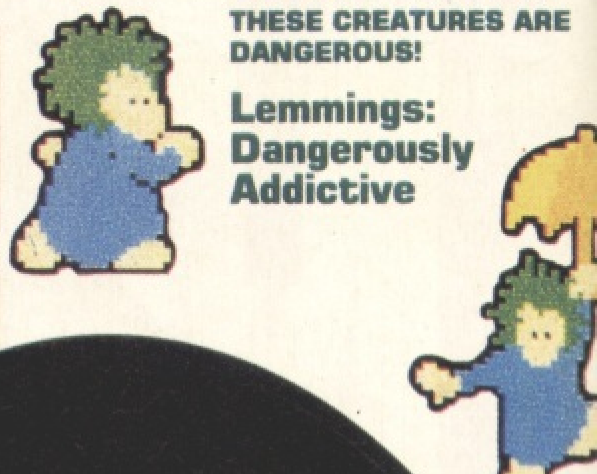


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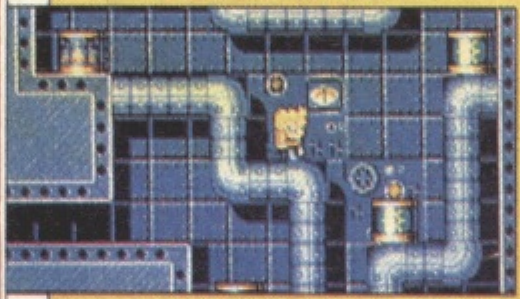


Lemmings: Dangerously Addictive

FOR AMIGA, ATARI ST AND PC GAMES

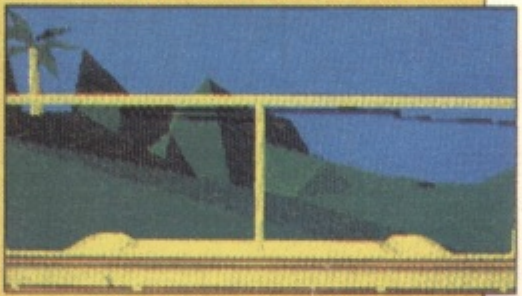
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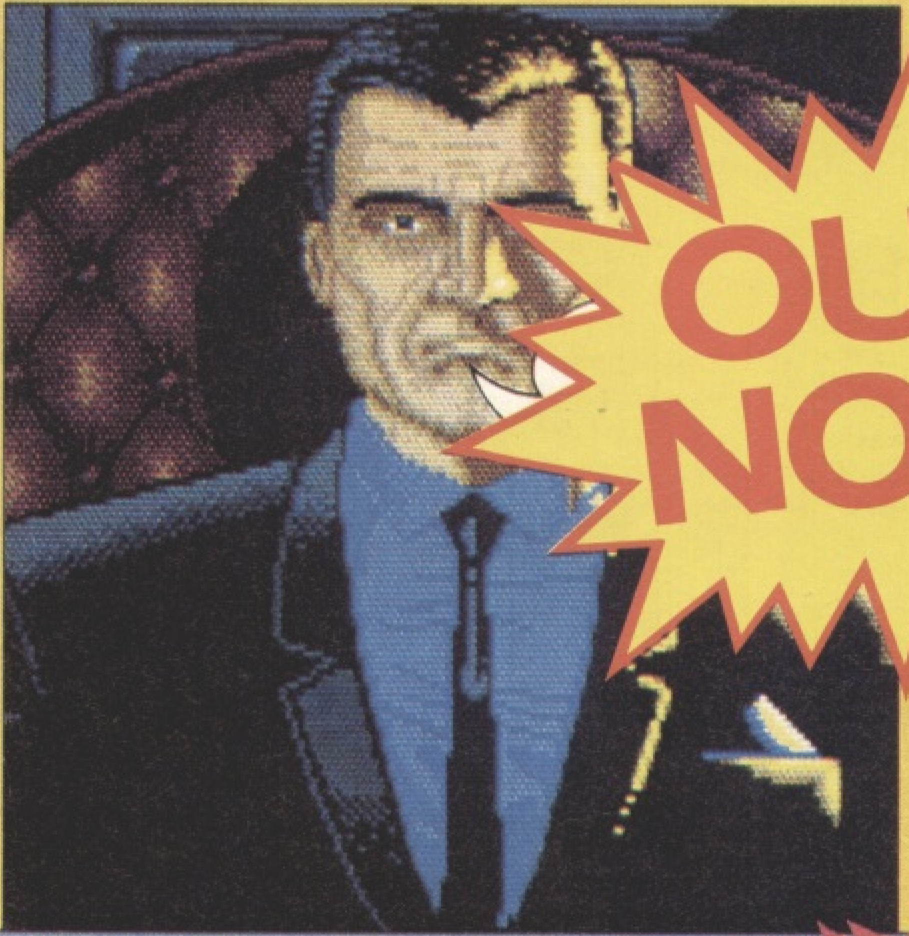


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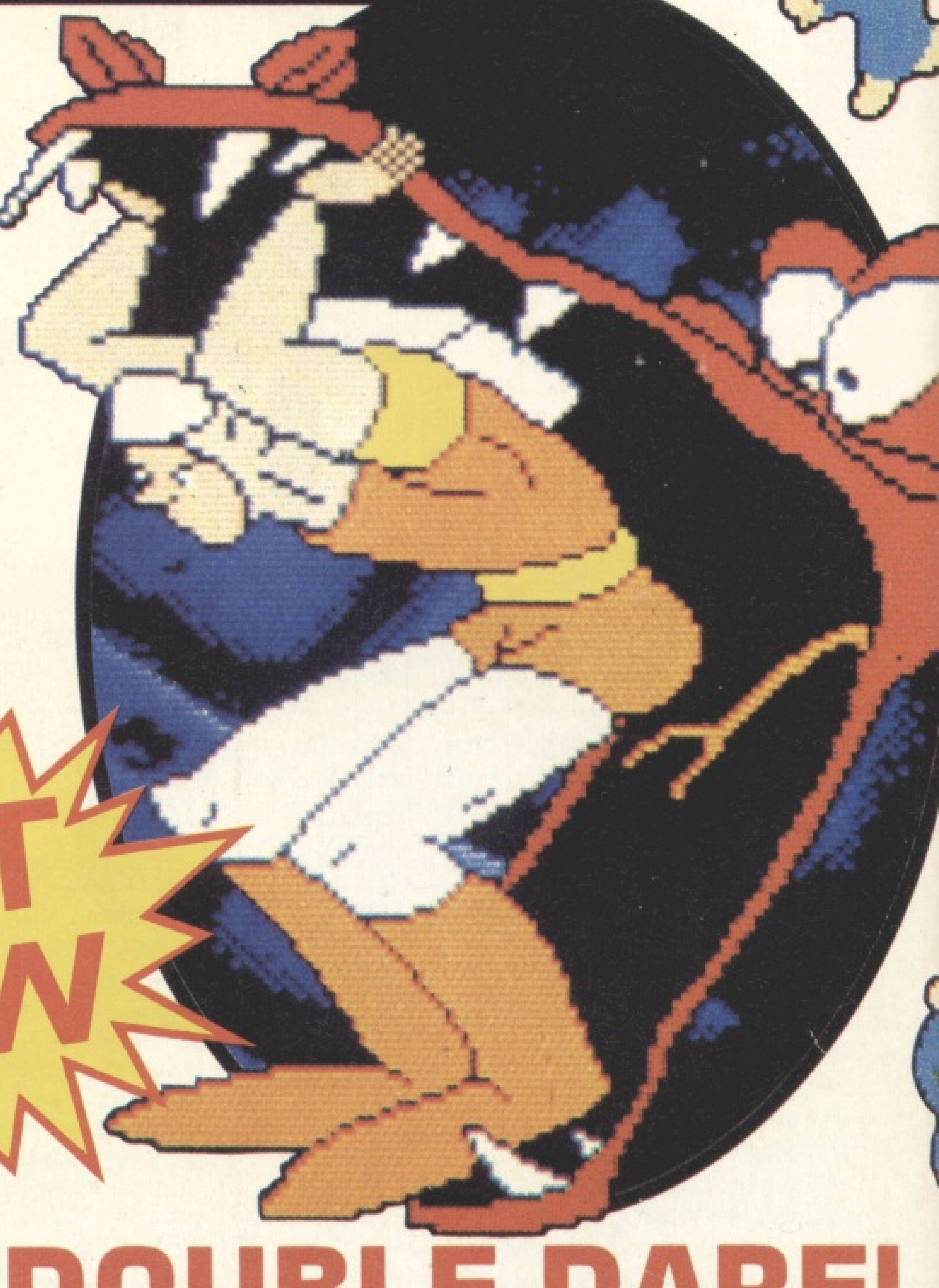
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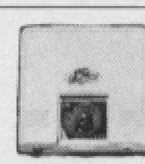
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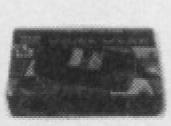
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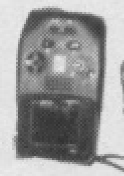


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PREVIEW

SEGA

HER OF LAN

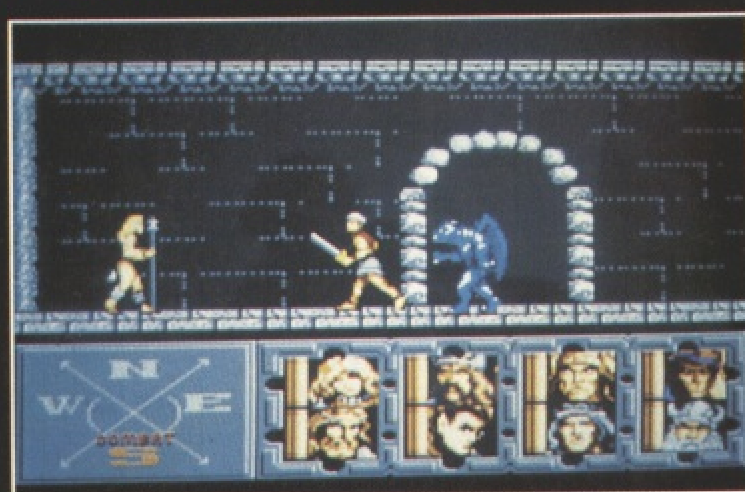
A new role-playing arcade adventure appearing soon on the Sega is Heroes of the Lance, based on the massive-selling TSR role-playing board game series and featuring all the characters from the popular Dragonlance fantasy books.

The object is to guide a band of eight travellers around the landscape, solving puzzles and fighting the mythical beasts that get in your way.

Each character has a special ability, and as a whole the party is powerful - when they start getting killed off, however, the game becomes increasingly more difficult.

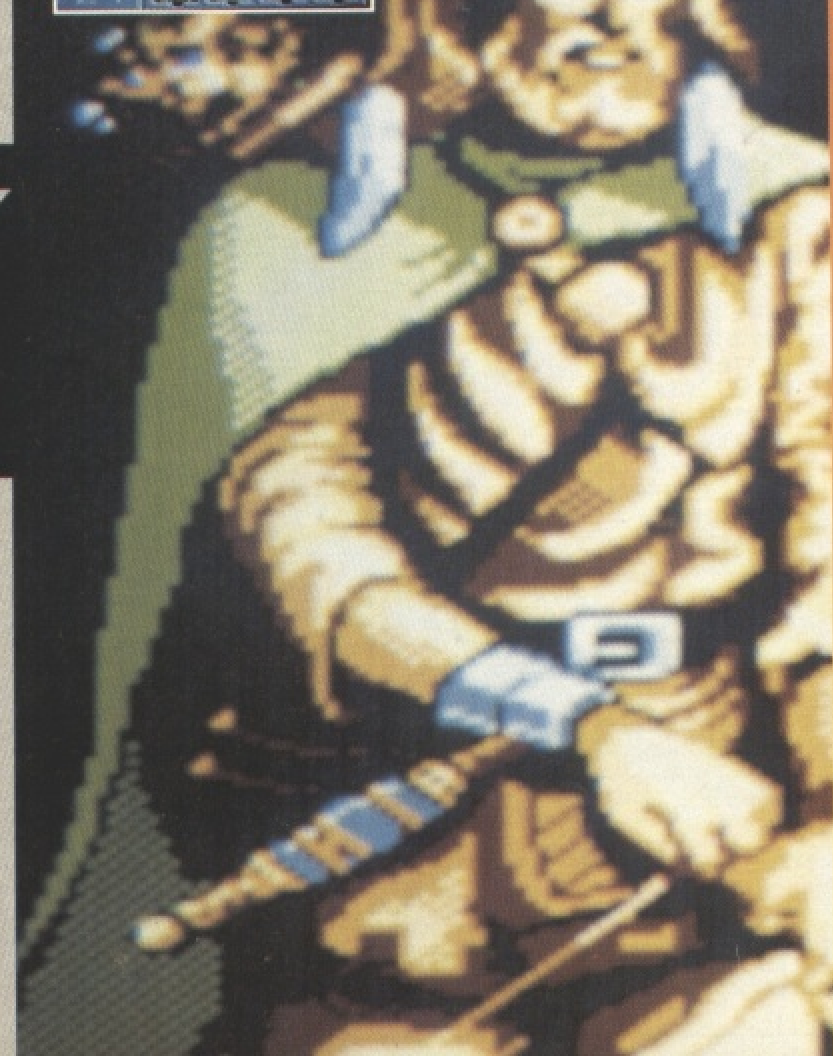
Heroes of the Lance proved to be a big success when it was launched by US Gold on computer formats, and this Sega version looks like it'll do just as well. The graphics are excellent, and there's enough depth in there to keep players happy for months. We'll be reviewing it as soon as it's ready - so if you're an arcade adventurer, keep your eyes peeled.

Oo-er. It's a gribbly blue thing.



Run!!!

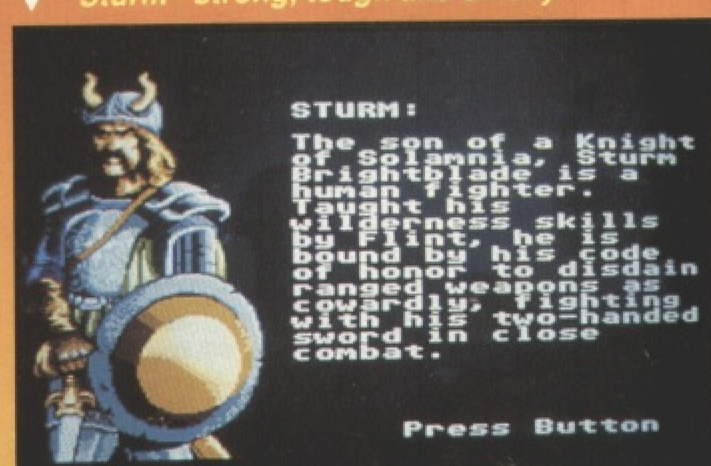




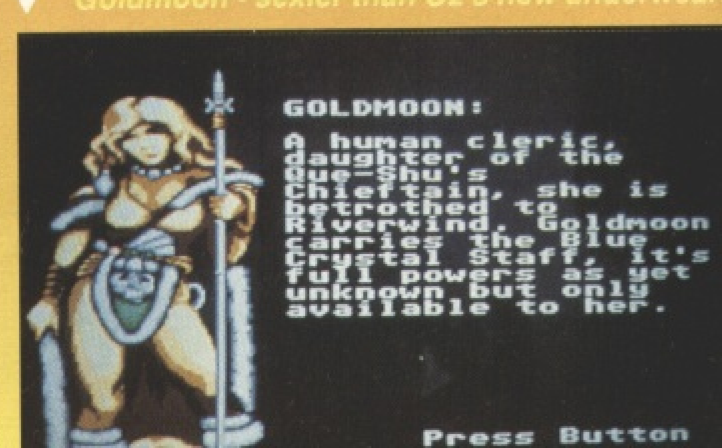
THE CHARACTERS

Heroes of the Lance features eight different characters for you to control. There's Goldmoon, a chieftain's daughter blessed with special healing skills, Riverwind, an expert fighter who's Goldmoon's lover, Sturm, another fighter, Caramon a warrior, Tanis, leader of the band, Tasslehoff, a thief, and Flint, an axe-lobbing dwarf.

Sturm - strong, tough and smelly.



Goldmoon - sexier than Oz's new underwear!



ROES THE NCE

Riverwind - silent, but deadly.







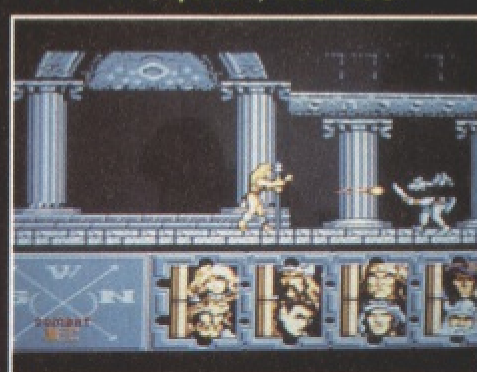
BY: US GOLD

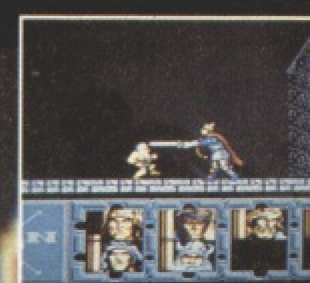
PRICE: TBA

RELEASE DATE: APRIL
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: N/A
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD

1 PLAYERS

Fnar, quack, hoo-hoo!







A mouthful of Listerine will help this guy!







発売間近

PREVIEW

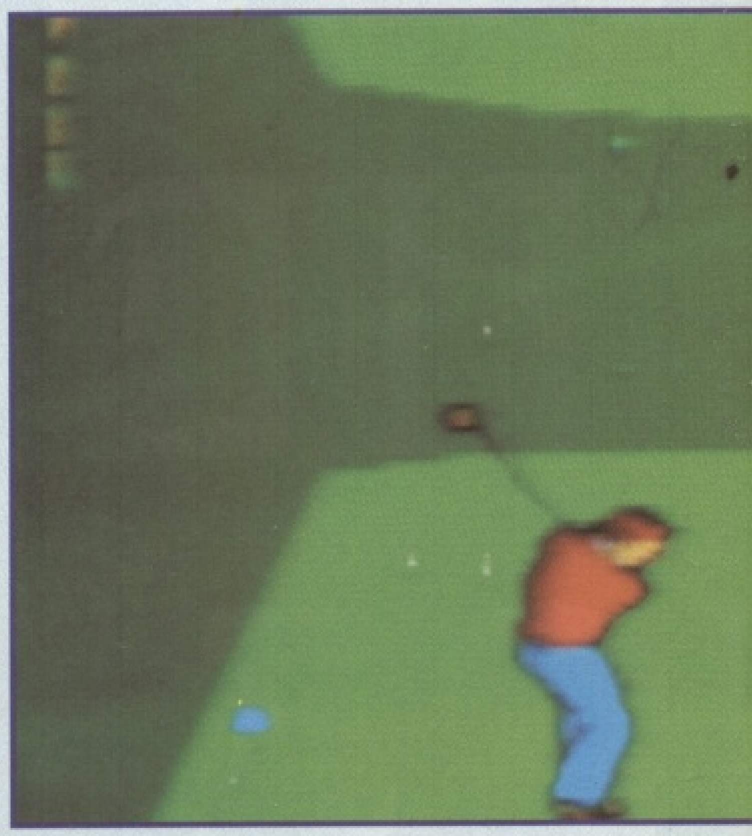
SEGA

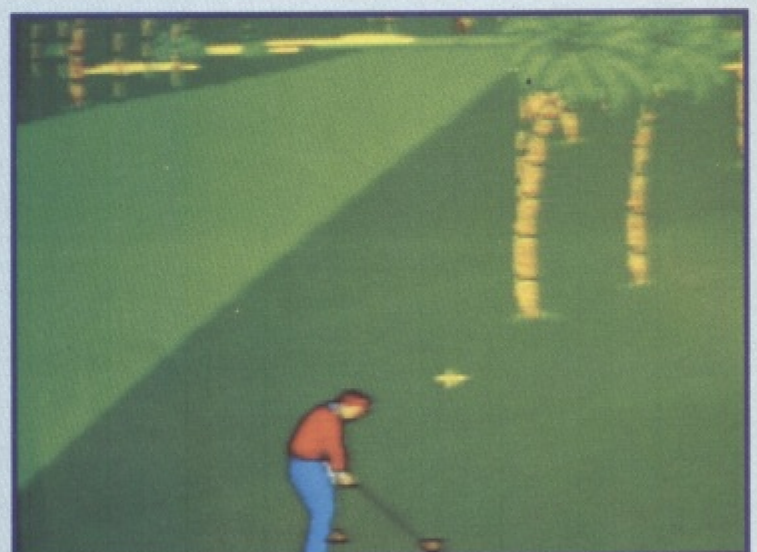
LEADER

Leaderboard, the classic computer golf game first saw the light of day way back in 1986. Three other versions of the game were released over the following years, and the last and arguably the best one, World Class Leaderboard, is to soon appear on the Sega.

One to four players can participate in an 18-hole round, and the object is simply to hole the ball within the least possible shots. The courses are fiendishly designed, with lakes, bunkers and forests conspiring to make play as difficult as possible.

Featuring great graphics and some neat golfer animation, World Class Leaderboard is a fine golf simulation which is bound to appeal to fans of the sport.





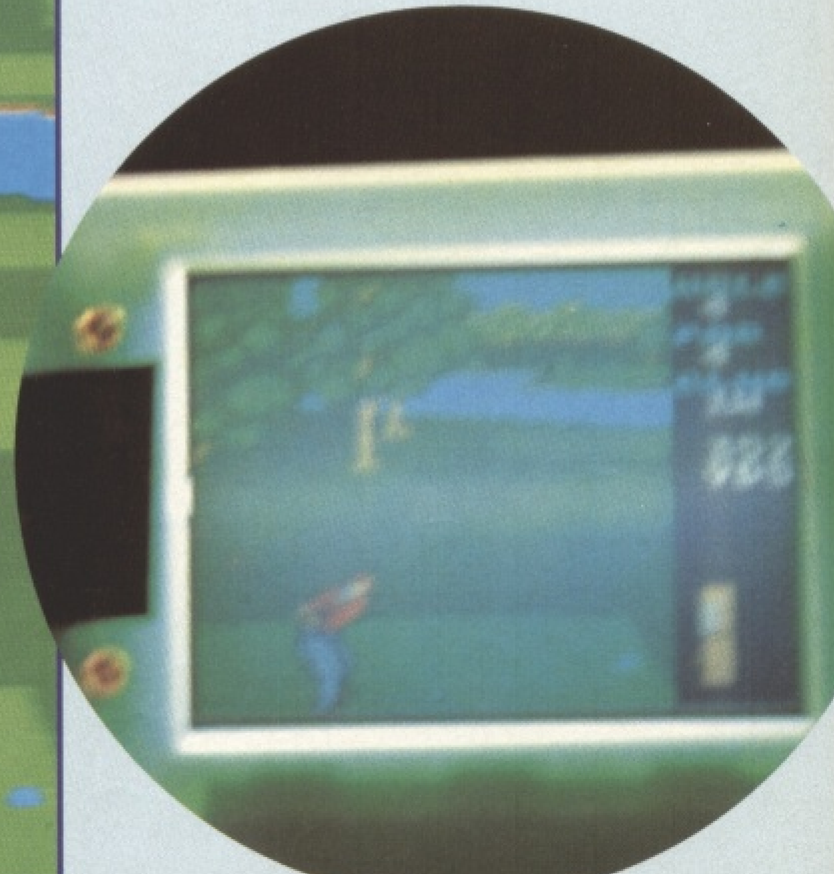
▲ *Our golfer likes a bit of rough.*

▼ *A firm grip is required here.*



GAME GEAR TOO!

World Class Leaderboard is soon to appear on Sega's new portable machine, the Game Gear. First impressions reveal that it's a pixel-perfect copy of the Master System version, containing all its thrills and spills. Here's an exclusive early development shot for you to have a look at - it's looking good, isn't it?



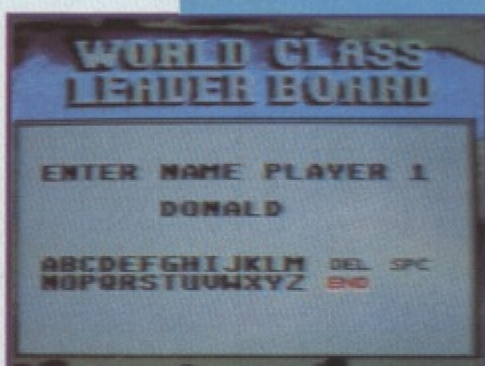
BOARD





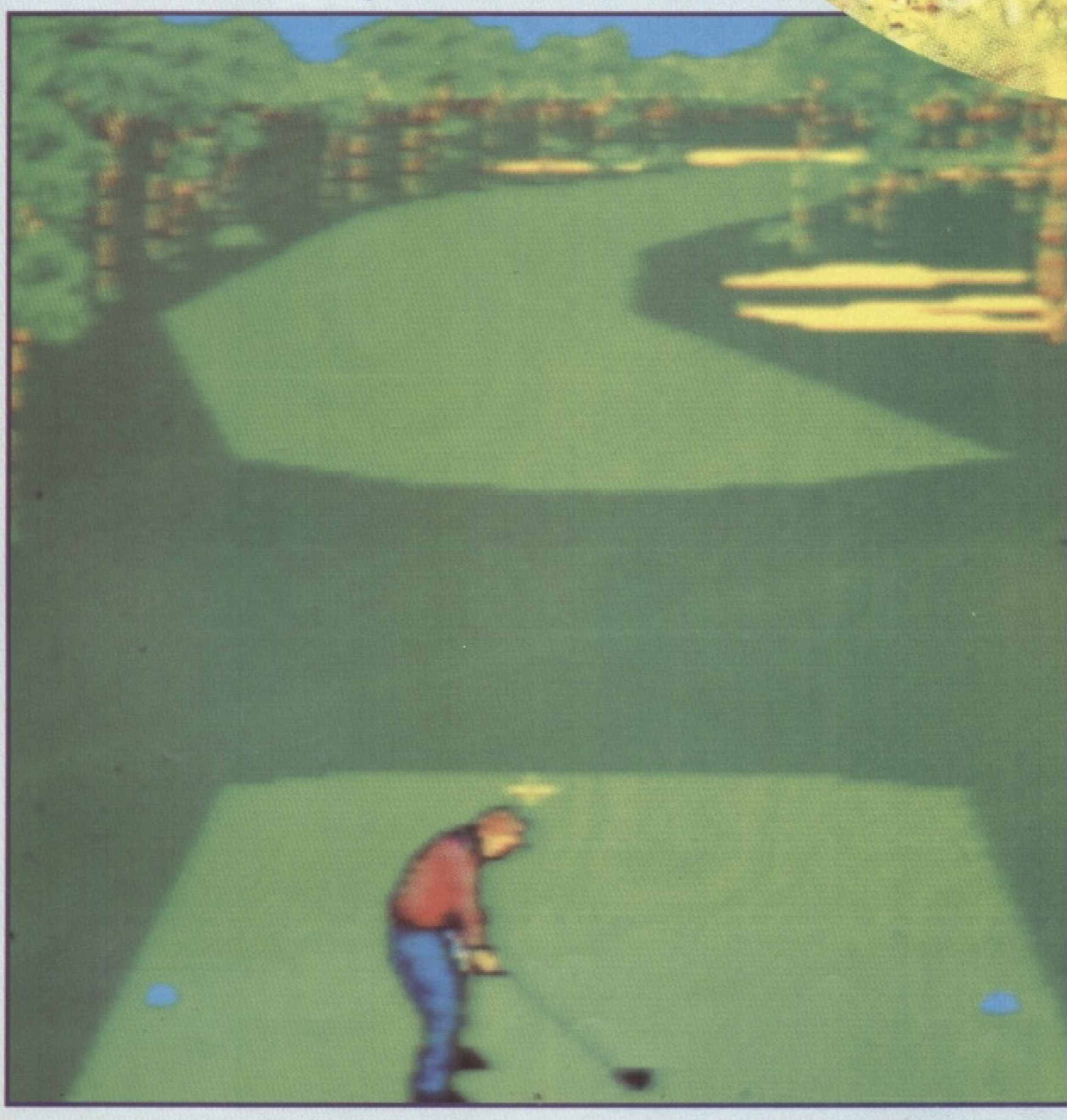


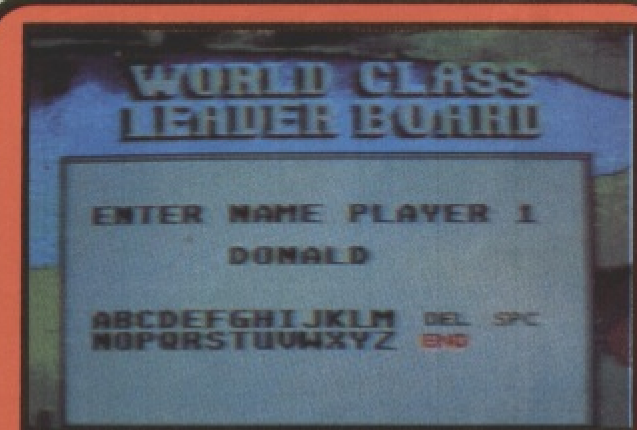
▲ *Mini map*



▲ ***A powerful stroke makes your golfer shoot a huge distance.***

▼ ***Don't whack the ball - a gentle stroke is much better.***





BY: US GOLD

PRICE: TBA

RELEASE DATE: APRIL
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: N/A
CONTINUES: N/A
SKILL LEVELS: 4
RESPONSIVENESS: GREAT

1 PLAYERS

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MY COMPUTER CONSOLE IS...

YOB'S GOSSIP

WHAT DID THEY GET FOR CHRISTMAS

If you're wondering what Santa brought the juvenile team for Christmas, wonder no longer. One of his little pixies (and we're not talking about Nicky Hemming here) revealed that a Super Famicom went to a certain Jaz Rignall (the lucky swine), Matt was the recipient of a fine leather motorcycle jacket and a variety of CDs, Oz got some socks, underwear, aftershave and a Janet Jackson video (how boring can you get?) and young Gaz got nothing.

GAMEBOY OFF TO WAR

The Pentagon in the United States recently sanctioned a motion to send crateloads of Gameboys to the troops out in the Gulf. Sounds like a good idea to me! But what I'm wondering is, why not send Gameboys to Saddam's army - they'd be so busy playing Tetris that our men could sneak in and set everything to rights without having to resort to any sort of violence!

SEGA PIRACY

Following on from the Nintendo multi-game pirate cartridge story that I uncovered a couple of months ago, I've now found out that there are similar Megadrive cartridges available from unscrupulous pirates in the far east. Four games appear on one cartridge - one has Strider, Super Monaco GP, Super Shinobi and Golden Axe, while another features Truxton, Forgotten Worlds and Thunderforce II and III! Not bad, but these things are highly illegal and bringing such a cartridge into the country is a criminal offence.

BETTY BOO - DOIN' THE SEGA!

In a pre-Christmas issue of swingsome Smash Hits magazine, sexy pop siren Betty Boo revealed that she was secretly hankering after a Sega Master System! Why? So she can play her favourite game, Chase HQ, of course!



BY: ACCIDENT
PRICE: NEGOTIATE
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: SOFT
LIVES: 1
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: FAST

1 PLAYERS

PRESENTATION 69%
Generally unkempt and untidy, but occasionally makes the effort when "clients" are involved...

GRAPHICS 69%
Not exactly an artiste, but very good at drawing the facts 'n' figures on the advertising board.

SOUND 72%
A very, very loud and raucous Irish accent. And that's when she's NOT shouting.

PLAYABILITY 92%
Plenty to get your teeth into, and it takes a truly expert player to explore the depths on offer.

LASTABILITY 90%
Loads and loads - your joystick will never be the same again...

OVERALL 85%
Plenty of fun and entertainment on offer - just don't be put off by the loud sound and robust looks.

NEXT MONTH



IF YOU THOUGHT THAT MICKEY MOUSE ON THE SEGA MASTER SYSTEM WAS GOOD - WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE THE MEGADRIVE VERSION! WE'LL BE GIVING IT THE FULL MEAN MACHINES TREATMENT WHEN WE REVIEW IT NEXT MONTH!

ALSO

WE'LL BE RUNNING IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF THE LATEST SEGA, MEGADRIVE AND NINTENDO GAMES - SOME OF THEM ARE UTTERLY INCREDIBLE. WHICH ONES? WELL, WAIT FOUR WEEKS AND WE'LL TELL YOU!

PLUS

MORE SUPER WHOPPA TIPS, A HELPLINE SPECIAL AND OODLES OF Q+A
FANTASTIC COMPETITIONS WITH MORE AMAZING PRIZES TO WIN!
MORE OUTLANDISH YOB!
LOADS OF MEGA PREVIEWS
ALL THE LATEST GAMEBOY STUFF
THE HOTTEST NEWS FROM HOME AND ABROAD
AND THE ALL-NEW CHARTS (HONEST!)

MAKE SURE YOU DON'T MISS IT - GET TO THE NEWSAGENT EARLY, OR BOOK A COPY BEFORE THEY ALL SELL OUT!

ON SALE FEBRUARY 1ST, MEAN MACHINES IS ANOTHER FINE PRODUCT AND WILL COST YOU A MERE £1.75.



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